OUR ASIAN NEIGHBOURS

A NEW ZEALAND JOURNALIST'S INTIMATE REPORT

By J. H. Fullarton, Associate Editor of The Daily News.

CONTENTS

General	Country dealt with	Page
ON THE DOORSTEP OF ASIA	Asia	6
SINGAPORE—CITY OF CHARM	Singapore	9
SPICY LITTLE ISLAND	Ceylon	11
THE PROBLEMS OF PAKISTAN	Pakistan	15
TIMELESS ASIA	Asia	18
THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE	India	22
TEA AND TEMPLES IN RANGOON	Burma	25
THE TEMPLE BELLS ARE RINGING	Thailand	27
CITY OF WEALTH AND POVERTY	Hongkong	29
OUTMANOEUVRED IN LAOS	Laos	33
THE BIGGEST CITY ON EARTH	Japan	36
A GLIMPSE OF MANILA	Philippines	39

Political and Economic		
ELECTION IN SINGAPORE	Singapore	44
BASIC DEMOCRACIES	Pakistan	47
TALE OF FAR KASHMIR	Kashmir	51
BURMA, LAND OF REBELLION	Burma	54
VENICE OF THE FAR EAST	Thailand	57
TOOTHBRUSHES IN TAIWAN	Formosa	60
CONVENTION IN TOKIO	Japan	64
CAN ASIA STAY FREE?	Asia	66
"JAPAN RENOUNCES WAR"	Japan	70
PEOPLE ARE THE BEST AID	Asia	72
JAPAN THE INTANGIBLE	Japan	76

CONTENTS (continued)

	Country dealt with	Page
Special Topics		
PRISON ON A TROPIC ISLE	**Singapore**	80
TYPHOON WARNING!	**Hongkong**	82
A MEMORIAL TO N.Z.	**India**	85
A VISIT TO THE BARBER	**Thailand**	87
BRITAIN RIDES HIGH	**Asia**	89
OF SHOES AND DRAINS AND OLD JAPAN	**Japan**	92
SUKIYAKI—WITH GEISHA	**Japan**	94
THE UNQUIET AMERICANS	**Asia**	96
THE WOMEN OF ASIA	**Asia**	99
MISS ASIA GOES VISITING	**Asia**	102
N.Z. AIRMEN ABROAD	**Singapore**	105
Personalities		
M. J. SAVAGE WAS THE MODEL	**Singapore**	110
GREAT LADY OF ASIA	**India**	114
INDIA'S MAN OF DESTINY	**India**	117
NO SIESTA IN LAOS	**Laos**	120
THE MAN FROM PRE-WAR JAPAN	**Japan**	122
THE TUNKU AT HOME	**Malaya**	125
INTERVIEW AT EDEN HALL	**Singapore**	128
Trade Prospects		
N.Z. MUST GET OUT AND SELL	**Asia**	132
A VISION OF MILK	**Hongkong**	135
ASIAN DAIRY MARKET	**Asia**	137
Summing Up		
MORE POSTS IN ASIA	**Asia**	142
THESE I RECALL . . .	**Asia**	146
A LAST LOOK AT S.E.A.T.O.	**Asia**	150
IN RETROSPECT	**Asia**	153

FOREWORD

The vast global revolution that has taken place since the end of the Second World War in 1945 needs no emphasis.

To Australia and New Zealand what were formerly referred to as the Middle East and Far East countries have developed with startling speed into near Asian neighbours. Economically, politically and strategically, in the national security sense, they have assumed a new and profound significance.

As the No Man's Land dividing the contestants in the so-called cold war between Communism and the West, East Asia presents the riddle of the age. Into which camp, if any, is she moving?

In the economic field, overshadowed by the cloud of depressed prices for butter and the impending union of the United Kingdom with the European Common Market, what are the prospects in East Asia for the sale of New Zealand primary products?

Because of the critical importance to New Zealand of questions such as these The Daily News decided to despatch its associate editor, Mr. J. H. Fullarton, on a seven weeks fact finding tour to Singapore, Malaya, Ceylon, Pakistan, India, Burma, Thailand, Hongkong, Formosa (Taiwan), Japan and the Philippine Islands.

His brief was to absorb the atmosphere of the countries he visited, to try to discover what their people are thinking, and to pursue in general terms a threefold theme—descriptions of the places he visited and the people he met; assessment of the paths the various countries appear to be following economically and politically; and investigation of the market potential in each country for the sale of New Zealand produce, particularly milk products and meat.

Interviews and the itinerary were carefully planned, and The Daily News is deeply indebted to a vast number of people and organisations for the help and co-operation it received in that respect.

It was decided that in order not to lose atmosphere or freshness Mr. Fullarton should mail "on-the-spot" reports as the tour proceeded, and sum up his impressions and conclusions after his return to New Zealand.

This programme was adhered to, and the outcome was rather overwhelming. So popular did the daily despatch from Mr. Fullarton become that The Daily News and its staff have been almost inundated with requests for extra copies of the newspaper or reprints of the articles.

It was accordingly decided to reprint the articles in booklet form, and this volume is the result.

The contents do not pretend to be a carefully prepared and edited treatise on East Asia. They record each day's experiences and reactions with descriptive ability, humour and originality. They suffer from defects that are inescapable when writing at speed, under high pressure, often bone weary, and as often as not in the early hours of the morning because time and the next appointment did not permit otherwise.

In spite of these handicaps readers will discover for themselves evidence of the keen analytical mind, the penetrating insight and the objective judgment of the author as disclosed in his articles.

Taking into account the long journeyings and the countless interviews, some of them with the highest and most important people in the land, Mr. Fullarton's output of material was prodigious.

The Daily News takes this opportunity of acknowledging what it regards as the very competent discharge of an exacting assignment.

D. F. C. SAXTON,
Managing Editor,
The Daily News.

New Plymouth,
June 20th, 1961.

FOOTNOTE

For the convenience of readers who may be especially interested in one or more particular aspects of Mr. Fullarton's investigations his articles are grouped in this booklet under six main headings—General, Political and Economic, Special Topics, Notable Personalities, Export Trade Prospects for New Zealand, and finally a General Summing Up.

As an indication of the nature, variety and quality of the sources from which Mr. Fullarton obtained his material, some of the principal people in each country with whom he had personal interviews are recorded on the back page of this volume. The Daily News extends to all these people, and to many others whose names are not listed, its grateful thanks for the co-operation extended.

GENERAL

ASIA

ON THE DOORSTEP OF ASIA

Darwin, April 27.

I stand tonight on the doorstep of Asia, for Darwin is in a dual sense a frontier town. Southward, creeping uncomfortably close, is the desert; northward the Timor Sea, the southern approaches to the Near North. And here on the verge of a 50-day fact-finding tour of 12 Asian countries, it is appropriate for me to reappraise the reasons for my journey.

I am going to South-East Asia for The Daily News to endeavour to measure the pulse of Asia on current problems and to inform myself on events and trends in that vital area. This I cannot do by conversations with Europeans, however well informed. Much of the information I seek must come from the Asians themselves. My problem will be to find Asians ready and anxious to talk fully and frankly to a visiting non-Asian journalist.

There will be no lack of talk, of course, about inconsequential things, and cocktail party topics. On deeper things—the true attitude to China and the Chinese, to communism, S.E.A.T.O. and democracy—I have been warned that I shall meet with a bland and disarming courtesy that tells me nothing. How this wall confronting the white-skinned stranger can be breached is perhaps the most formidable obstacle confronting me.

I have striven to overcome it partially by careful reconnaisance. I have cultivated men who know and love Asia and the Asians and have used the "old boy network" to collect personal introductions to influential Asian people. There will be no lack of general information, of course. So many people will be telling me so much about so many things, and in so many varieties of the English language that it will be impossible for me to retain all my impressions.

For that reason I am following a set theme, concentrating my questions on a limited number of topics. Out of the answers will emerge, I hope, a picture of Asian thinking on such topics as trade with New Zealand, communism and its answer, economic aid, the recognition or non-recognition of communist China, and racialism.

I am going to Asia with an open mind on most of the issues that beset the continent, but in view of information I received in an absorbing eight hours at Whenuapai on Anzac Day I am prepared for shocks.

There I met a high-ranking R.N.Z.A.F. officer who served several years in Asia, learned two Asian languages and something of Asia's ethics, philosophies and religions.

I learned from him that many of the cliches we utter about Asia are as empty as the abominable red and brown desert over which I flew today. I learned that some of my views on Asia may require reappraisal and that I may expect to hear gentle but barbed criticism of the very aspects of the New Zealand way of life which cause us most pride. Out of those discussions I added to my theme some more searching and particular questions. Questions like this—

- What do Asians think about New Zealand's immigration laws? (I know the answer in advance but am anxious to hear their views on the means of amending the system.)
- What do Asians educated in New Zealand say about New Zealanders when they get home?
- Are we New Zealanders sending the right type of man, with the right type of briefing, to fill Asian diplomatic posts?
- Is the West making any real effort to understand Asia or is it still merely trying to buy friendship with dollars?
- In particular, have we in the West grasped the central fact of the social stability of Asia, unchanged and changeless, whatever cataclysms befall the nabobs at the top?
- What is New Zealand military policy in Asia? Are we Westerners visualising the Indo-Chinese peninsula as our front-line—to be defended to the last Thai? Are we preparing to fight the type of battle which will never be fought?
- What does Asia believe to be the answer to communism—if there is an answer?

With this theme to guide me in the next 50 days I may be able to keep my bearings while I am bombarded by information, explanations, views and criticisms by men and women of a dozen races. That does not mean, of course, that I will turn a blind eye on the smaller and more fleeting impressions, the colour and the stirring movement of the East. For this is a journey that I want Daily News readers to share since the questions I shall be putting concern all New Zealanders and the answers will interest many.

So here I am in Darwin with the greaty empty heart of Australia behind me and Asia ahead. In two days I have moved far from a Taranaki Anzac morning.

I had heard much of the discomfort of the Hastings aircraft on which I am travelling to Singapore. I had been warned of the hardness of the seats, of the mosquitos at Darwin, of the heat and discomfort above the desert. Instead I found the R.N.Z.A.F. kindly, obliging and considerate and the discomforts largely imaginary.

I have had a brief glimpse of Sydney, growing like a mush-room, its skyline cut by the silhouettes of giant cranes erecting

yet more skyscrapers. A city of soaring prices where a nip of whisky costs 1s 10d and a pint of milk 11d. A city of serious, rather apathetic people giving no outward evidence of the drive which must be behind Sydney's growth. And a city in which one must stop half a dozen people to be certain of finding a dinkum Aussie.

I have seen the lush Waikato-like plains of the New South Wales coast give way to tawny and grey downs, almost destitute of green, where stations are large and homesteads few, and later to the desert itself, criss-crossed by the ghosts of dead rivers, ochre-coloured or brown and sometimes even purple, but always dead and always illimitable.

I am writing this on the terrace of the Fannie Bay Hotel, aseptic, sybaritic and mosquito free, in a sunset no one would have believed had Turner painted it. (Would he have added the king-size dragon flies?)

In Darwin a room in a house built on stilts (for coolness) may cost as much as £10 a week—just for the bare room. Prices are incredibly high and the town—about as large as Hawera—is bulging at the seams.

Aborigines imported from Melville and Bathurst Islands do most of the heavy work, for day after day the humidity, like the temperature, is in the high 90's.

Behind Darwin stretches the bush, the grey-green rather thin bush of Northern Australia, mostly mulgah and spinifex. The rainy season is not long over and pools of water still lie about the desert with here and there a flash of new green growth. And all over the bush little fires send their smoke signals into the air, mostly deliberately started by the aborigines to flush out the game.

And even in Darwin the Kiwi has come to roost for a space. I was served at dinner by a charming girl from Feilding who with a friend had driven a car across the dead heart of Australia from Sydney and is now working to earn a passage further north.

Darwin is a sprawling makeshift town, largely peopled by airmen and public servants, and appears to contain no indigenous white Darwinians. Consequently it is a town that nobody loves, and which would be very difficult to love.

But it stands on Asia's threshold and has immense strategic importance. Java is barely an hour's flight away by jet liner. So it is from Darwin, in the steaming heat that my adventure of the next seven weeks really begins.

SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE — CITY OF CHARM

Singapore, May 2.

Any person wishing to tour Asia should start at Singapore. For after Singapore one is prepared for anything. Anything can happen here and usually does. It is a city of incredible contrasts and charm, peopled by at least 30 different races who are all extraordinarily friendly and approachable, but, best of all to the Kiwi traveller, most of whom speak English.

The contrasts. The highway and traffic control is as modern as anything I have seen; the enormous spate of new educational buildings and new blocks of cheap flats would tax the capacity of the New Zealand Ministry of Works. The public amenities are remarkably efficient.

But all this is done with the minimal use of heavy machinery, for Singapore's main problem is to make labour, not to save it. The women who sweep the streets and do much of the heavy work in an improbable combination of black trousers and red hats like crazy mortar-boards use implements as old as Confucius. Street upon street of colourful shops are open to the street and innocent of window glass. The pavements are crowded with illegal stalls and from the first floor windows fly the most intimate washing suspended on long poles across the streets.

There are Sikhs here, turbaned and bearded, Ghurkas, Tamils and indeed every race of Mother India; Malays and Aborigines from the Federation, Indonesians from the islands 30 miles away, Pakistanis, Singhalese and Jews. And over a million Chinese, the main driving force of eastern Asia. A neat attractive supremely efficient people whose realism is the great strength—and problem—of this part of the world.

This is a city and island with immense, insoluble problems. Too many mouths to feed, too little land, the old markets abroad shrinking as the new nations around Singapore industrialise and no hinterland to feed this great port, the fifth in the world.

Into Singapore as many as 100 vessels a day steam or depart for every corner of the globe. This is one of the world's greatest entrepot ports but it cannot live on sea trade alone.

Herein lies the problem of the energetic Government of Lee Kuan Yew (average age 35). Anti-colonial in principle it wants true freedom and wants to be quit of the great British bases which compromise Singapore's dignity. Above all things Singapore wishes to merge with Malaya and possibly with the three British colonies of Borneo in a greater Sino-Malaya.

But as Lee himself has admitted in the bluntest terms, to eject the bases would be suicidal. They are worth 250,000,000

dollars a year (£32,000,000), support 160,000 people, and provide £300,000 a month in business to shopkeepers. If they close down Singapore must have its own army (for what new nation would dream of doing without one?) at a cost of some £20,000,000 a year. So the bases are safe for the time being.

They are safe for another reason. Fear and apprehension of the Chinese dominates Singapore's neighbours. Indonesia is persecuting Chinese traders. Borneo is uneasy at the tremendous power of growing Chinese minorities. And in Malaya, where 4,000,000 Chinese have been content so far to keep the substance of power while allowing the Malays to go through the motions of government, the Malays are reluctant to merge with the city on Singapore island because a merger would put the Chinese population in the majority.

Lee Kuan Yew knows this and realises too that when Singapore reaches full independence the chance of a merger will have gone. His strategy is to Malayanise his people so that the Malays in the Federation will be ready to merge. It is a nice problem delicately balanced and explains why the fire-eating P.A.P., elected to power two years ago, has trimmed its sails to a middle of the road policy.

Meanwhile Singapore has an honest and dynamic government, and a rather inadequate civil service to carry out its behests.

It is interesting in another way. It shows up the fragmentation, the Balkanisation of the area which New Zealanders are apt to lump easily together into one digestible mouthful—South-east Asia. But even Little Laos contains four distinct races at variance with one another (even ignoring the omnipresent Chinese). And on the whole the peoples of South-east Asian countries know less about their neighbours than New Zealanders do, and there is a distinct coolness between many of them, entirely based on ignorance.

In Singapore, the headquarters of Commonwealth defence and political thinking, lies the alien force which is striving to get Asians to know and understand one another in order to achieve the stability which is the main lack in the whole area.

In Singapore something of that stability has been achieved, despite a disparity of people, religion and stages of development that makes the head reel. Malays in sarongs, Chinese in everything from loin cloths to business suits, their women in everything from flappy trousers to Paris gowns. (I have seen one with hair dyed red and eyelids painted blue, an awe-inspiring sight). Yet these people are beginning to regard themselves not as Sikhs or Chinese or Tamils or Malays, but as fellow Asians and Singaporeans.

CEYLON

SPICY LITTLE ISLAND

Colombo, May 5.

"Going to Ceylon?" said my Singapore friend. "Well, so long, pal, it's been nice knowing you." For Ceylon is yet another hot spot on this seething continent, a land where Opposition leaders are flung unceremoniously into jail, where premiers get shot by saffron-robed monks and where the Commonwealth's first woman premier is proving anew that the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

So I arrived in a country where a curfew applies to vast areas and emergency regulations include a strict censorship of the press—just as the judge was summing up in the trial of four persons for the assassination of Mr. Bandaranaike.

What a fertile field for the newspaperman—given a little time. But, alas, a hitch in my schedule brought me to Colombo 36 hours late and left me only 36 hours to learn the story of Ceylon's internicine trouble. Nor did fate stop provoking me there. The Comet IV sped from Kuala Lumpur and deposited me at the airport at Negombo in three hours and 20 minutes. Two hours and 40 minutes later just as the Comet was preparing to touch down at Bombay, I drew up at my hotel after a journey interspersed with altercations which does not bear remembering, much less describing.

In the twilight I was ushered into a vast sprawling anachronism of a hotel swarming with unexplained and unnecessary servants, a hotel all shining brown varnish and red plush so that at any moment I expected the statue of the late Queen Victoria to step down from her marble pedestal some blocks away and call for her smelling salts. In this hotel people with the ghosts of long dead imperialists air conditioning means a large fan emitting a brisk south-westerly and the furniture is massive enough to hide a small elephant. Still the service is good and they bring you a slice of delicious melon with your early morning tea (best Ceylon of course).

As in that dispirited evening all central Colombo had a stuffy Victorian look I was not surprised to learn that my most important Colombo contact had suffered a stroke and been flown urgently to London the day before.

I need not have worried. Morning brought me that slice of melon and Mr. Raja Rayan, who markets New Zealand dairy produce in these parts and who promptly appointed himself my courier-chauffeur, grasped instinctively what I wanted and in a bewildering eight hours whisked me hither and yon. I met Tamils, Singhalese and burghers (the Eurasian legacies of the old Dutch

who came before the British), I met male and female, for the Government and against the Government, in the Government and on the press until after an absorbing meeting with an outstanding personality I began to see the picture in the round.

The outstanding personality was Mr. Gunawardene, Minister of Agriculture in Mr. Bandaranaike's Government and outstanding opponent of his wife's. A graduate in agriculture at Columbia University he has twice visited Peking and is another Asian who is convinced that Asian democracy must be socialistic (on the New Zealand pattern) and markedly authoritarian.

Here is the real picture. Ceylon is an enormous tear-drop inhabited by 10,000,000 people, 2,000,000 of whom are Tamils from South India, imported by Britain to work the tea plantations. The rest are Singhalese, speaking their own language. From independence the Tamils sought to have their language declared an official language, arguing that they would otherwise be at a disadvantage in seeking positions in a Singhalese state. The Singhalese reply was to make it easier for Tamils to learn Singhalese. Successive administrations under the U.N.P. (the United National Party called cynically the uncle-nephew party because the Senanayake family led the first three Governments), and under the two Bandaranaikes, man and widow, failed to concede anything more. For the Singhalese see the 45,000,000 Tamils barely 100 miles away in Southern India and fear the cultural extinction of their language if they give way.

That was how it began. The murder of Mr. Bandaranaike, allegedly by a monk was unconnected with the language problem but ignited the gunpowder. The 1958 riots showed that the issue had become emotional and racial. Tamils began to talk of dividing Ceylon into two units of a federal republic—Jaffna, the northern half being Tamil country. There was even talk of secession. Tempers rose and the Tamil Federal Party leaders were clamped into jail with an alacrity that even the Portuguese in Angola could not have bettered. Mrs. Bandaranaike had shown her claws.

But wait. Now is the time to expose the myth, the mystique that surrounds Mrs. Bandaranaike. She is not and has never been a politician. She has never stood for election, nor taken part in a parliamentary debate. Under the Ceylon constitution the Government appoints members to both the Senate and the lower house. Mrs. Bandaranaike sits in the Senate as a Government appointee. She is the banner and symbol of her party. As the widow of the previous premier she won a vast emotive sympathy vote last year.

But in the half-year or so since this achievement there has been a great deal of talk about nationalisation of this and that, about agricultural expansion, about nationalising the Press; a great deal of talk and very little else. Then suddenly a new personality merged, a 29-year-old man, coherent and highly

intelligent, who called himself Felix Dias. He doesn't any more. Now he has assumed his real name of Felix Dias-Bandaranaike for he is the prime minister's nephew by marriage. He holds one portfolio and virtually controls the Prime Minister's Department. He is ruthless, decisive and inexperienced in politics but he holds Mrs. Bandaranaike's hand with a very firm grip. Thus another Ceylon dynasty is consolidating.

Three weeks ago the Tamil unease in the north and east exploded into violence. The Bandaranaikes moved decisively. A curfew was imposed in the area and complete censorship blanketed the Press. So far the censorship stops at banning publication of news about the Tamil trouble but the censor has the power to stop any news at all. One paper has knuckled down under threat and come out on the Government side. The others are biding their time, hoping that when the emergency restrictions are lifted their freedom will be restored. But they may have to wait a long time for in 1958 a similar contretemps took nearly a year to cure.

Now Felix Dias-Bandaranaike has moved again. There has been a bid to nationalise the insurances and at this moment a bill is being passed which sets up a state-run oil selling business at the expense of Shell. This is the thin edge of the nationalisation wedge.

One appointed member, an improbable character called Singleton Salmon with a salty Irish wit told the house this trenchantly and at length. "Nationalisation is a clean thing—like the guillotine. But this is strangulation and slow death."

The new Bandaranaike concern will purchase oil from Russia, which gave rise to the bazaar rumour that the Russians are behind the move against Shell.

And meanwhile, in this electric atmosphere in measured terms a judge sums up against a monk on a charge of assassinating the penultimate premier and against three other people for aiding and abetting. (A fifth conspirator turned State's evidence). From all I can glean the trial has been a fair one. The defence has clung to the victim's dying words that his assailant was a man in robes. For Mr. Bandaranaike knew the chief accused well and the argument is that had he in fact done the killing, Mr. Bandaranaike would have muttered his name.

The casual tourist would glean no hint of this in verdant Ceylon. As he ate his peppery curry out of banana leaves, read his censored paper, or studied the five-coloured flags and remarkable tableaux in electric lights in honour of Visek Day, the birthday of Buddha, violence, curfews and censorship would seem miles away. The girls in their Singhalese saris with smooth Grecian lines, the boys in jerseys punting Rugby footballs about

as New Zealand boys are doubtless doing at this moment, the smiling friendliness and the statue of Queen Victoria make all such talk a nightmare.

Especially in this mausoleum, this British museum of a hotel, as one spoons one's melon at 7 a.m.

But this is no legend. Sri Lanka, the island of spices has brewed itself a searing hot curry this time during the heady partnership of Bandaranaike II and III.

PAKISTAN

THE PROBLEMS OF PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 8.

On my pilgrim's progress through Asia I have, like Bunyan's hero, been confronted alternately by hope and despair. The young pulsating promise of Singapore was succeeded by a glimpse of democracy in crippling chains in Ceylon. Then two days ago I flew into Karachi, the present capital of the world's largest Moslem nation.

At first glance I might have been back in the Egypt I remember from the war. The arid plains with their sauntering flocks of sheep and goats tended by the Makan coast people, the land's perennial thirst for water, the coloured rag fluttering from stony graves were all mnemonic of Egypt.

In many ways the problems here are the ones I remember from the Middle East, for West Pakistan, owing much of its culture to Persia and Arabia, is spiritually of the Middle East. Water is the key to everything. Where there is water the desert blossoms. But because, at least until the Five Rivers are comprehensively harnessed under the World Bank's plan, there cannot be enough water for Pakistan's needs, the desert will continue to creep to the very edges of the villages and cities.

Pakistan's problems are therefore the familiar problems of Asia.

- Too many people for the available food.
- Too few honest and efficient administrators.
- An illiteracy rate of 85 per cent.

Yet in three days I have found in Pakistan a purpose that is heart-warming and a clear knowledge in the official mind of the course the country is plotting. It is a courageous course called Basic Democracy, the success or failure of which depends in the last analysis upon the personality and genius of one man, President Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan.

Mark the two titles, for they tell the story of soldier turned statesman, who would still much rather be a plain soldier. Yet he was not entirely new to politics when he seized power some two years ago, having served a term of two years as Minister of Defence in a previous regime. There is evidence, too, that with Nasser's and Kassem's example before him Ayub had been preparing himself for power long before he seized it.

Even his enemies admit Ayub's honesty, integrity and passionate belief in his country. He has a strong vein of common sense and a remarkable ability to work hard. He begins work at 6 a.m. and is meticulous in keeping his paper work up to

date. After lunch he rests for an hour or two, during which time he reads the latest political books, like a doctor keeping abreast of the latest medical advances. Then back to work until dinner at 10 p.m. and bed (with a political book) soon afterwards.

He is served by a patchwork quilt of a team. Some senior army officers and one or two others in his Cabinet are first rate. The rest are sub-standard. Though realising this Ayub is not greatly concerned. Now that the great plan has been made in all its details, Cabinet is less important than the civil servants who will carry it out. So Ayub is concentrating on improving the secondary ranks of the public service, which is quite good by Asian standards.

The great plan was not born overnight nor did Ayub have a vacant section on which to translate it into bricks and mortar. A gang of corrupt and inefficient politicians striving to implement the compromise 1956 constitution had first to be swept away. The sweeping up was done ruthlessly—from the Governor-General down. With the discards went the 1956 constitution, a patchwork affair that erected a roof for parliamentary democracy before laying the foundations.

Meanwhile Ayub had other problems—the Kashmir issue, border disputes with India, the Five Rivers controversy, unemployment and the need to industrialise. The border dispute was settled, a compromise reached on the Five Rivers, American aid began to pour in at an unprecedented rate so that the American International Co-operation Administration has more money to spend there than Pakistan can find immediate reason for spending. Kashmir remains, the one roadblock in the way of permanent understanding with India, but this immutable roadblock is another story.

Meanwhile, as the Great Plan gathered weight, Ayub with a massive vote of popular confidence behind him began to review his political attitudes. Hitherto he and his country had eschewed anything Russian, had refused to dicker or confer with Russians, had been more American in this respect than the Americans. Ayub has changed this adolescent attitude. Soviet technicians have been invited to guide a search for oil, to the consternation of the western oil companies and of the Americans.

Yet this is a realistic move. It leaves Pakistan unshaken in its devotion to S.E.A.T.O. and C.E.N.T.O. Indeed, Ayub was prepared, if need be, to send a brigade of troops to Laos a week or two ago.

This then is the economic and political picture in Pakistan today and serves as an introduction to a later article which will deal with the great plan — the basic democracy on which Ayub and his followers set such store.

Few of these things are evident in Karachi, though the rash of new building, the resettlement of 150,000 refugees from India and ugly rows of prefabricated ministerial buildings are evidence of the purpose of the people. Karachi with its 2,000,000 people, with its camel and donkey-drawn carts, its black-veiled women, its three-wheeled baby taxis, and its noisome open sewers is on its way out as a capital. The ministry has already moved to Rawalpindi in the far north near where a brand-new capital is to be erected at Islamabad. But Karachi remains the nerve centre of the Great Plan, which has begun auspiciously enough.

But the "bearers" still salute and call one "sahib," and the Sind Club and Karachi Gymkhana still stand as mute evidence of the day when burra sahibs were burra sahibs.

TIMELESS ASIA

En route to Delhi, May 9.

Ever since advertising became a battle of superlatives, teeming Asia has won many intriguing and piquant adjectives in the travel brochures of the world. Crowded Asia, colourful Asia, timeless Asia. They are all true, especially the last, for Asia has made terms with the passing minutes. Time remains Asia's slave not its master. Indeed time couldn't matter less.

One of the first lessons I learned on landing at Singapore was that one never arrives on time for a meeting with an Asian. If so one is required to practice a little Oriental patience. This time-wasting is not apparent. The Asian always seems busy, arguing, gesticulating, dashing hither and yon, but almost always round the task in hand.

As an example it took two hours and 40 minutes for an asthmatic bus to carry me from Negombo airport to Colombo, 18 miles away. It was 50 minutes before we left the airport though all the passengers were aboard the bus in half that time. The only man missing was the driver, who was engaged in a 20-minute harangue with some airport staff on a matter of protocol—whether airport staff were entitled to a free ride to town.

That argument lasted so long in a heavy monsoonal rain that a river rose and made a bridge we were due to cross impassable. The driver made a reconnaisance and arrived at the inescapable conclusion that he must make a detour.

By this time the whole rural population had arrived and begun to proffer advice. They fell swiftly into three factions. Those who favoured a left-hand detour, and those who favoured a right, who in a country as socialist as Ceylon, were naturally in the minority. The third faction were busily engaged in striving to sell to the unwary, matches, elastic, some anonymous and suspicious looking fruit and soft drinks (half pints of liquid dysentery).

The crisis took half an hour to resolve whereupon the driver put his hand firmly on his horn and drove pell mell down a narrow road crowded with bicycles and pedestrians and the occasional hump-backed cow reclining and ruminating placidly in mid-highway.

The second point about Asians is their love of a "fiddle." A Kiwi friend in Karachi tried to import some free New Zealand milk powder and in so doing broke about 14 assorted laws which cost him a 50-rupee fine. The next time he went

to elaborate lengths to avoid offence. When the milk powder arrived the Customs officer asked darkly: "Is this a fiddle?"

"Of course it's a fiddle," said my friend blandly.

The officer smiled delightedly and passed the package through.

The straight road is never the quickest way home to the Asian. Outside Karachi lie the ruins of a bridge. A fine concrete structure some 400 yards long over a nullah, or dried water-course. It lies in broken segments as if a mighty meteorite had fallen upon it. It was erected seven years ago just before the rains came and crumpled the bridge into fragments. Because the kutcha (second class) contractor had cut a few lakhs of rupees off his costs by leaving out the reinforcing steel. Now seven years later the ruins remain because no one admits responsibility for rebuilding the bridge.

A Canadian firm was overseeing a tunnel job through a hill. In mid afternoon the engineer left his men grouting—filling in tunnel cracks. They went on grouting all night poking liquid concrete through a crack into the tunnel proper. When the engineer returned in the morning there were 72 tons of concrete in the tunnel proper. This took several weeks to remove.

More than 80 per cent. of Pakistan's economy is carried by American aid and some observers believe that at least a quarter of the aid is wasted.

Take an example. A carbon brush on an expensive machine wears out. It will cost a rupee (1s 6d) to buy a new one. But to get the brush some 20 people of an ascending order of importance must sign a chit. The Asian way of circumventing this red tape pyramid is not to requisition at all but to leave the expensive machine to rust. Of course the 20-fold chit system is devised to prevent fiddling. Without it somewhere along the line some dusky character would be "flogging" the brush in the metal bazaar for six times its value.

In Karachi the Government offered loans for houses to civil servants in the middle bracket, but neglected to check the plans. The result is that at Nizamabad a vast suburb contains three houses out of four which will never be finished—because the money ran out.

Karachi is full of large American cars with left-hand drive. The thousands of Americans working in Pakistan are each permitted to import every tour of duty one car free of customs duties. They are landed at a cost of 2000 U.S. dollars or 10,000 rupees. In the past they have promptly been sold to local industrialists for as much as 50,000 rupees.

Some Americans continued to get home leave every six months in order to repeat this manoeuvre. (In Karachi they naturally used their wives' cars). The fiddle was finally uncovered

when a military attache tried to get 50,000 rupees out of the country.

Thereupon Ayub Khan performed an outflanking manoeuvre. All foreigners' cars can now be sold only to the State which gives 10,000 rupees for a 1959 Chevrolet and promptly sells it for 40,000.

But Asia is not all like this. Pakistan has millions of refugees from India who for a decade have been living in indescribable squalor in mud and leaf huts all about Karachi, grazing their buffaloes on the bare earth, and selling the dung for fuel. For 10 years pious resolutions for bettering their lot have periodically been passed and forgotten.

Last year Ayub acted. He gave an army colleague, Azam Khan, now Governor of East Pakistan, summary powers to clean the area up.

Azam forthwith stopped construction on all Government buildings and turned an army of builders to constructing the fantastic settlement of Korangi. In less than a year 40,000 homes housing 160,000 refugees were built, with community centres and schools. They were not luxury homes, merely two-roomed buildings in concrete blocks (made with Zeal-Pak cement) and contained in individual compounds surrounded by six-foot walls. No electricity, and water at pumps at the street corners. But there is sewerage—a luxury in Pakistan.

The settlement continues to grow. To begin with the refugees objected to moving. Azam called in the police and moved them compulsorily. The residents are required to pay six rupees or 7s 6d a month. After 20 years the homes will belong to them.

But here is the typical Asian tailpiece. Authority overlooked setting up mechanism for rent-collection. No rents have yet been paid so that the vast majority of the refugees believe they have been given the homes for nothing.

Although this article gives an unprepossessing picture of the Asian he is probably no lazier, more shiftless or more dishonest than we would be on a wage of 10 rupees a week. Asians are used to exploitation. Their only answer is to fiddle.

This morning I visited a tumble-down group of huts made of mud and floored with earth. Holes were dug in the floor in which squatted young Pakistanis (some of them children) before Heath Robinson looms held together by rough stakes and driftwood. There, with beautiful silks and working the shuttles with incredible speed and dexterity, they wove elaborately hemmed saris (six feet by about 40 inches) while goats nuzzled at the naked workmen.

Some exploiter in the city provides the materials and patterns and pays them a rupee a yard, or six rupees per sari. A good workman will make a sari in two or three days. These are luxury saris, selling in the city at 400 rupees or £30.

Asia's worst exploiters were always the Asians themselves. No European, however arrogant, would talk to a servant or bearer the way a Palm Beach suited, moustached young Pakistani bureaucrat talks to the lower orders.

In the jungle of Asia it is always a battle for survival. The weakest go literally to the wall where they sleep undisturbed in the hot, airless nights.

Timeless Asia, where justice and fair play and humanity have to be taught, and where true democracy cannot come until these lessons have been thoroughly learned.

INDIA

The Need For Discipline

Delhi, May 10.

"What these people need is education and discipline — at the grass roots level. The sort of education they get in the army, not the fancy stuff in universities. Above all, they have to be taught cause and effect."

The speaker, Mr. C., paused to let this lesson sink in, whereupon his wife began ruthlessly to dot all the i's and cross all the t's.

"I came over here with a missionary enthusiasm for my brother Asians. I was very soon disenchanted. What can you do with these people, what can you do with them?"

"They just can't keep honest," said Mr. C. "I've had gangs of them here painting this house. They had to be watched all the time, either by my trusted non-Indian servants, a Ghurka and a Kashmiri, or by one of us."

"Otherwise they'd take all the oil out of the primer, and pinch half the paint and fill up the tin with turps," said Mrs. C. "Every bit of the job had to be done twice and some of it five times."

"Every house in this area has to employ a nightwatchman because of thieves," said Mr. C. "They've no social discipline, and no knowledge of cause and effect."

His wife took up the tale.

"The way they live and eat, and the filth they live in makes cholera and amoebic dysentery inevitable. Nearly 90 per cent. of them catch these things. But you can't get the message across that flies cause it all. They believe in nothing they can't see. My bearer got conjunctivitis. I fed him fresh raw carrots, vitamin pills—and Golden Eye ointment. The third day he was cured and I managed to get the lesson across that the milk and the carrots were responsible for the cure. You've got to do that sort of thing."

I heard story after story proving the point that the lower caste Indian cannot think and must always be cheating someone.

"You deal with a grocer spending, say, 150 rupees a month," Mr. C. went on. "He short changes you and you warn him that if he does it again you'll go elsewhere. He does it again—sacrifices a steady customer for a few annas. Because he can't help it. Any more than a magpie can help it."

"Discipline," said Mr. C. "The army knows that. They get the jungle boys as recruits and with the jack-boot and army rules whip them into shape. Result is they've got a first-rate army.

But the rest haven't got any self-discipline at all. They can't even obey traffic rules, or any other rules. The main need is discipline among the lower orders."

He was caustic at the head-in-clouds attitude of the top brass who believe they have a well-oiled and working democracy. They build too big in Mr. C's view, being incapable of building by stages. A steel mill must be built in its entirety, with half of the furnaces idle.

Admittedly, after being given a substantial start by Britain, they have made Delhi the handsomest capital in Asia—but a capital of half filled mausoleums.

"And what of the leaders?" I asked.

"The hard core is still the British-trained Indian Civil Service. They're O.K. and take pride in putting I.C.S. after their names. But they're thin on the ground. The ones coming up aren't half so good. The worst part is that they think they are building from the ground up, and constantly stress that India had a democratic history in village councils that went into abeyance when the British came, and which they're trying to revive. Some are good —if the council is good, but most are incredibly bad."

I came away from this and other interviews convinced that modern India is a sham. Even the 2000 years of culture of which they boast is a sham. The Taj Mahal, their proudest memorial, was designed by a Turk and built by Persians.

Of course this is an exaggeration. The Indians have many gifts—charm of manner, a friendly coherence, but after meeting Mr. and Mrs. C. I keep looking for the thoughts behind the words. Criticism, however polite, is brushed aside with suave explanations that mean nothing. Indians believe what they want to believe, or affect to do so. They are ambivalent to a degree — full of the loftiest intentions, but ignoring the reality under their eyes — and noses.

In the next day or two I am to meet some of their great figures including Mr. Nehru himself, but what I have heard this first day in Delhi will make me extremely critical of everything I hear. Most of all I am apprehensive at the repeated assertion that Pakistan's leaders can keep Pakistan together only by constantly using criticism of India over Kashmir as a rallying point. And on the wall maps all Kashmir is marked as Indian territory.

The Indian temperament and character are clearly shown by the answer I received to my suggestion that Asian democracy must be authoritarian. "No, no," they say, "it must be like ours, without any trace of authoritarianism."

Yet elsewhere in Asia the authoritarian model on which they found their hopes of Utopia is built on Nehru's India. The rest of Asia understands India.

But what can you do with a people that uses a brand new tiled latrine as a rubbish receptacle, and continues to use the roadside as a latrine; that regards the Family Planning Bureau as a means of guaranteeing a family of 10 sons and no daughters; which cannot understand that disease stems from flies, and which mixes fresh hygienic milk with pond water to make it go farther?

It is easy to say that the answer is education. But what sort of education? Patient, practical demonstrations of the things we take for granted may one day solve the issue, but where to find either the teachers or the patience?

The last census figures give the Indian population at 438,-000,000 but many believe it is nearer 500,000,000. Many, many houses receive no census forms; in many others the servants living-in were not counted.

And many of these incredible people, knowing that each year provides another 7,000,000 mouths to feed, are beginning to boast that soon they'll be the most populous race on earth.

After 24 hours in Delhi I am filled with increased awe and respect for the British achievement in smoothly controlling this pot pouri of peoples for nearly 300 years. That respect is shared by the bearers and the poor.

"When the British were here and my wife or family fell sick some one looked after them. No one does any more, sahib," is the burden of their refrain.

Did I say that the future of Asia lies in some form of auth-oritarian rule? Sorry, it must be the climate. It's cool in Delhi tonight, barely 101 degrees at 9 p.m. It was 115 last week and will probably be 116 tomorrow. Thank God the air conditioning is working.

BURMA

TEA & TEMPLES AT RANGOON

Rangoon. May 15.

The unpredictability of air itineraries sliced my planned three days in Rangoon to 17 hours — from 4 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon. And even in non-Christian Asia Sunday is as dead a day as in New Zealand. In the circumstances therefore my prospects of seeing anything of this lush and fascinating capital could not be rated high.

Having said farewell to India at a dinner party given in my honour by officers of the Indian External Affairs Department, a dinner which ended at 1.45 a.m., I arose at 4.30 a.m. to catch the Rangoon plane at 6.45 a.m. A delay of nearly two hours in departure time (announced at 6.40 a.m.) was so reminiscent of the New Zealand airport intelligence service that nostalgia almost overcame frustration at the loss of a further two hours of my overnight stay in Rangoon.

In the event I did astonishingly well. The Viscount, by cutting down its stay at Calcutta, picked up all but 30 minutes of the lost hours and at Rangoon I was met by a remarkable assembly of notables — a Malayan, a Parsee, an Indian Burmese, and several Burmese — who crammed so much into my 16½ hours that my head is still reeling. I was whisked through the customs and into town, catching glimpses here and there of a glittering golden pagoda and meditation cave built by U Nu, the Premier, at his own expense to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of Buddha. The cost was several lakhs of chats. (A lakh is 100,000; a crore is 100 lakhs, and there are 13½ chats to the pound. In this part of the world numbers are written thus — 98,64,00 or 98 crores, 64 lakhs).

I saw too the great hotel built by Russian aid and a polytechnic built by the same hands. The hotel, not yet furnished because of a typically Asian dilemma on who shall run it, is intended to be ready for the South East Asian Peninsula games to be held in December.

Did I say Russian "aid"? In all such ventures the Russians require their pound of flesh or rather several crores of pounds of rice.

I took tea on the spacious lawns of the home of U Raschid Ali, Minister of Industries and Commerce, a Moslem, in a longyi or Burmese skirt, who visited New Plymouth as a guest of the Rotary Club there several years ago. It was a fantastic setting. The incredible flame of the forest trees were in full riotous bloom and the talk was good and frank and highly informative. As the

shadows lengthened my self-appointed couriers produced their magic carpet and transported me to the Shwe Dagon, one of the wonders of this or any other age.

My task is not to imitate Baedekker but I cannot resist the temptation to say a little of this golden gem, built on a hillock and approached barefoot, by medium of a lift.

The slim golden spire of the temple surmounted by a gold plated and gem-encrusted umbrella stands 370 feet high. Between the four gates and the paved courtyard cluster scores of 40-feet high gold replicas of the master pagoda, each donated by an individual. In each an effigy of the Buddha gazes benignly out. The whole is coated with gold foil, replaced out of the gifts of the poor whenever it grows tarnished.

The surrounding courtyard is paved with a variety of stones without pattern or conformity, since these too were donated piecemeal by the faithful. And beyond the courtyard, built in a dozen modes, some with pillars studded with flints or mirrors, some a meshwork of incredible examples of the goldsmith's or enamellist's art, stand other temples, thickly inhabited by Buddhas of all sizes. One holds a vast reclining Buddha in alabaster with golden gown. In another stands a vast bronze bell. He who beats three times on this with a faggot will surely return to Rangoon. (I used the faggot with some eagerness). The evening air was heavy with the smell of burning incense and the flower sellers did a brisk business.

Among the throng I was, as far as I could see, the only European. At every shrine monks in saffron robes knelt at their prayers, and the Burmese people in their colourful longyis and ainggyis (tunics) made their individual obeisances. At one spot a water carrier (at a price of half a chat) was praying for a family who lacked the ability to do so and who squatted behind him, getting their money's worth.

The thing that struck me was that this was a living shrine and no dead pile of 22-carat gold and gems and alabaster. This was the very heart of Burmese Buddhism, a pulsing, vibrant symbol of the hold this ancient faith has on Asia.

After this memorable twilight came a nine-course Chinese meal held outdoors, under lanterns. Again the talk was good and far-ranging. But of that more another time.

Then after a night as the sole guest in an old Chinese millionaire's palace, converted into a fantastic hotel, I rose at five so that in the cool morning my faithful couriers could take me on a pre-breakfast tour of the enchanting city.

I doubt whether ever before I have crowded so much into 16½ hours.

THAILAND

The Temple Bells Are Ringing

Bangkok. May 16.

"The temple bells are ringing from Rangoon to Mandalay." I know nothing about Mandalay but can assure you there was plenty of tinkling in Bangkok this morning.

Between a visit to Pote Sarasin, Secretary-General of S.E.A.T.O., and a reception to the vice-president of the United States, Mr. Lyndon Johnson, I spent an enchanted hour in the great temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Grand Palace where the Kings of Siam are crowned and the great tiled cloisters about the temple which contain a quarter of a mile mural "comic strip" of the Ramayama, the Buddhist story of the triumph of Good over Evil.

Siamese architecture is a joy to behold. The roofs are tiled with overlapping circular tiles coloured, like a carpet, with a "hem" of navy blue, an inner strip of gold and the centre of red. The corners of the eaves are upsweeping, ending in a curious curved wing like a one-pronged harpoon—a symbolic rendering of a snake to guard against evil spirits. Every garden (even the European consulates) contains a foot-square replica of a Siamese house on a pedestal, again to ward off evil spirits. The theory is that the spirits will inhabit the tiny house and leave yours alone.

Architecturally the Thais are great borrowers and adapters. The great temple borrows heavily from the Chinese, the Indian and the Cambodian or Khmer styles of architecture, but for all that is entirely Thai. The temple itself is an incredible place, a blend of glass mosaic, mosaics of broken china, mother of pearl inlays and intricate gold tracing about the eaves. Deep blues and reds with floral inlays dominate the colour scheme. And there is gold everywhere.

The emerald Buddha is perhaps two feet high, made from a vast block of jade (or jasper) and stands atop a fantastic platform of golden figures of acolytes, each with a symbolic umbrella, and a pot pourri of gold and other ornaments and accoutrements vaguely connected with the faith. Two naked cupid-like marble figures of European origin and a vast Eastern grandfather clock are anachronisms that somehow blend with the whole.

The emerald Buddha's sketchy dress is changed three times yearly according to season. In winter he wears his woollies and only the King is permitted to change his garb. Above the small green head a three-tiered umbrella of gold is suspended.

The great throne of the King of Siam also has a vast umbrella above it and behind towers an enormous galleon-like ship, painted gold and guarded by small, exquisitely modelled gilt figures of Thai, Indian and Chinese origin.

And round and about the temple stand vast formidable super-human figures, gaily painted and most ferociously fanged —the guardians of the temple and its mysteries.

This gives only the sketchiest idea of a splendid scene which even a colour camera could not capture—for a camera cannot record the glory of the temple bells, small golden bells with long hanging, heart-shaped tongues which tinkle delightfully and mysteriously when a small breeze blows as it was blowing this morning.

The great mural in the cloisters tells in loving detail of the gory battle between the Goodies (helped by a monkey army and some giant cats) over the green-faced Baddies and their tame giants. A score of artists have contributed to it and each has painted his small private joke into the vast "strip." Here is a monkey ripping the pants off a startled monk. There a woman belabours a hen-pecked husband with an umbrella. There is also a perfect cameo of a drinking party with the hard-headed, three-bottle man still tilting the elbow, while his companions are either unconscious or being sick in a corner.

The whole is carried out in the Chinese manner with garudas (bird-men) dragons and other ghoulies and ghosties very thick on the ground. The same sort of ghoulies and ghosties which, fashioned in stone, are the subsidiary guardians to this holy place.

And in one corner I came across two exquisitely cast metal cows, not the hump-backed Asian article, but big-uddered beasts that could well be found in their hundreds munching Italian rye at Ngaere or Matamata or Morrinsville.

HONGKONG

CITY OF WEALTH & POVERTY

Hongkong, May 20.

This dazzling, pulsating metropolis that is Hongkong is known to every New Zealander as a shoppers' paradise and a Mecca for tourists, but it is a great deal more than that. Its beauty is partly indigenous; partly exotic.

From the height of Mount Victoria the vast skyscrapers give a Manhattan touch to the skyline, and from certain viewpoints the city is strongly reminiscent of both downtown Wellington and Auckland. The shops, of course are out of this world and the prices make one gasp, but it is not my task to talk of these.

Hongkong is a rocky island of 32 square miles, one of more than 60 islands of varying size which, together with Kowloon, comprise the colony proper. Kowloon city lies across half a mile of sheltered water on the China mainland and is only 4½ square miles in extent. In this area 1,500,000 people live. In Hongkong (or more properly Victoria) another million are crowded. These are the British possessions, but behind Kowloon lie the New Territories more than 300 square miles in extent, leased to Britain until 1996 or 1997. In this area are many new factories and water reservoirs which argue a supreme faith in the future that is Hongkong's most remarkable attribute. The brigade of troops, the small air force, the naval squadron (to which the carrier Melbourne and New Zealand's Royalist are at present attached) are incapable of defending this last outpost of the old colonisation from a Chinese attack.

"They could take this place by telephone," one old China hand told me, "but I'll lay six to four it will still be British when my grandson is older than I."

Water and space are most precious commodities in this Oriental changing-house and market. Water, much of it drawn with Chinese communist co-operation from Red territory, is rationed; every possible drop of the 85 inches of annual rainfall is husbanded. As for the land it is so precious in the colony proper that seven storey buildings must come down to make way for 16 or 20 storey ones. Reclamation constantly goes on from the Kowloon side, and the great houses of the rich, the great apartment houses and the hovels of the refugees from the mainland are for ever climbing nearer the mists of the 1800 foot Mt. Victoria.

The island itself, however, can still find room for a golf course, and a race track (with a betting turnover of £500,000 a meeting). In the sheltered coves are splendid bathing beaches. In Aberdeen tens of thousands of people live and die on sampans

in the shallow water; others live and die in sampans that will never see water again, being securely bogged in mud flats.

The whole island is contoured with magnificent roads and on every level there are tall apartment houses. Across the water in Kowloon rear the vast cheap apartment blocks still being erected for refugees, but tens of thousands of these unfortunates are still homeless.

I know of one such family living in one tiny room opening on to a six foot alley way. From high above friends of mine look down nightly into this alley and watch the children, by the light of a kerosene lamp set in the alley, looking over their homework, for primary education is free and one new school is going up a fortnight.

In the sheltered anchorage the ships of the fleet ride and the busy ferries and walla wallas (small passenger craft) chug to and fro and the sea for miles around is forever pockmarked by the distinctive silhouettes of hundreds of junk sails.

Hongkong is a Crown Colony ruled in the old manner by non-elected executive and legislative councils in which the Governor is all powerful. It is supremely well run and it is probable that no one wants to change it. Now and then there are agitations for a little more representation by the inhabitants but the present authorative pattern seems to suit everybody.

Ah, but what of the communist sympathisers here in plenty. Probably half the population sympathises with Peking and half with Taipeh.

In my damp vigil at the ferry quay on typhoon Alice night one Chinese showed resentment at being pushed firmly yet kindly into line by a policeman. He bellowed vituperations in Chinese which, a bystander told me said in effect: "When the communists come you won't be doing that any more."

Back came the Chinese reply from somewhere in the crowd: "When the communists come, fellow, they'll be using bayonets."

There are many Chinese communist newspapers here and as many anti-communist ones. The great Bank of China stands side by side with two other mighty banks and is owned and operated by Peking, the clearing house of all China's trade. And Hongkong citizens travel in and out of China carrying food parcels to relatives in that drab and dangerous land.

Why then have the communists in the unions and elsewhere not begun to make the trouble that one expects in such circumstances? The answer can be only that Peking has told their leaders to keep the peace. Informed circles here believe that a secret deal was made between Britain and China when the former established diplomatic relations with the latter. The price, so they say, was recognition of Britain's right to Hongkong. The New Territories are another story. It will be surprising if China does not claim them at the end of the century.

This I know. In Delhi, during a discussion on the Sino-Indian border dispute I was shown a Chinese map of China printed in 1953. It was shown me to prove that eight years ago the Chinese were marking as Chinese the areas now claimed from India. But on that map Hongkong and Kowloon were marked in solid red and the New Territories etched in red. China was coloured yellow.

Old China hands and many of the leading Chinese approve Britain's recognition of Peking. They bitterly resent the fact that if Chiang Kai-shek had won his war with the communists the Americans intended to return Hongkong to China.

Of course Hongkong is a whispering gallery, though no one seems to care much. The Americans employ a huge staff to translate the Chinese papers that come in large numbers into the colony, and never a sparrow falleth in Canton or Shanghai but the street sweepers in Wang Chi or Nathan Road know all about it next morning.

Maybe Hongkong is too optimistic about its future. But it is gambling on the essential role it plays in Red China's economy. This is Peking's escape valve. One man here called it a "lock" (in the canal sense) through which goods and currency and intelligence are shuttled back and forth.

There is no "we-about-to-die-salute-you" about the Hongkong people. They are busy, vital, industrious, conscious of the wealth and stature of their city and mighty proud of it. They are cheerful and friendly and give no indication of resenting Europeans. And they are extraordinarily law abiding. The crime rate here is one of the lowest among the world's great cities.

Hongkong is a tribute to the realism of the Chinese race. Let Singapore sing for the moon and this thing called freedom. Hongkong's people are as free as air. What matter if the British want to run the show? They run it extremely efficiently and appear to like doing so.

What is more there is little of the arrogance of the old days. Those Japanese monkeys pricked that balloon.

This seems roughly to be the Chinese attitude and it says much for the immovable commonsense of the race that even the emotional tide of anti-colonialism and the presence of the evil giant across the border cannot shake them.

"In Canton there are no cheongsams," one man told me. "I know. I go there monthly to see my parents. Only samfus (the floral pyjama dresses of the poorer Chinese). Dingy ones too. No colour. There's no paint on the big buildings and the plumbing doesn't always work. Rice is rationed and other things too. My wife has nine cheongsams—two-three hundred dollar ones—and my daughter, I don't know how many.

"How many cheongsams would my wife have if Hongkong went free? Two maybe—the 100 dollar ones."

"And how many if the communists took over?" I asked.

He smiled a gold-toothed smile. "No cheongsams then or wrist watches or parties at the Miramar. Just work, work, work —and rationing. Nothing else."

"But the Chinese like to work."

"The Chinese, sir, like to work all right—all the time. But they like to work for themselves—not for commissar's wives."

"I take it you don't like communism."

"I'm not political, sir. But I tell you this. I have many communist friends here. Who hasn't? They all like their wives to have nine cheongsams and wrist watches and parties at the Miramar. See what I mean?"

I think I see what he meant. Do you?

LAOS

OUTMANOEUVRED IN LAOS

Bangkok, May 18.

I leave Bangkok on the heels of Vice-President Lyndon Johnson and an hour ahead of the Thai Foreign Minister, en route to Geneva for the talks on Laos.

In the past 10 days I have heard the views of many men on Laos and on the prospects of a settlement—men like Mr. Nehru, U Raschid Ali of Burma, Pote Sarasin, secretary-general of S.E.A.T.O., Quong, the voluble "leader of the Thai Opposition" and Prince Wan, the suave veteran politician who has very often been acutely prophetic about his own peninsula.

I have talked, too, with Americans, Australians, British and New Zealanders and have emerged with the conviction that this latest Geneva conference is likely to produce another signal defeat for Western policy.

Mr. Nehru does not think so. He believes that the universal agreement on a neutral Laos is a hopeful starting point and that the crisis will be at least partially solved.

Others are not so hopeful. Prince Wan, reared in the Versailles tradition on a diet of French logic, is apprehensive that the Americans will adopt a hand-to-mouth attitude instead of deciding in advance on their minimum requirements and fitting their compromises about these.

An American editor of a Thailand English-language newspaper laughs to scorn any satisfactory settlement along the lines of neutralism.

"What sort of neutralism will the Reds accept now they're in the box seat?" he asks.

Mr. Lyndon Johnson has swept into town with a flourish of trumpets on a meet-the-people tour on the American pattern which was most impressive if you could contrive to keep your tongue out of your cheek.

He issued sundry rallying cries to America's allies but marred it all by saying the time had perhaps come to "count heads" among the nations to see where the West's friends are. There was a pointed jibe in this at the neutrals and even at Britain, to whom there is a certain coolness in Thailand, and at France.

But the circus of motor-cycle outriders, and the vision of the vice-president leaping into sampans and shops to greet the startled inhabitants has not brought a Laos solution any closer. Undoubtedly Mr. Johnson has gone on to Delhi (where he must change his tune), with a Thai "shopping list" in his brief-case—the price of Thailand's continued co-operation.

But to Mr. Johnson and the Americans Laos is merely another facet of the cold war. To the Thais it is something personal, vital and important.

Consider the facts. Thailand shares many hundreds of miles of border with Laos. For much of this the great Mekong River is the boundary. Indeed the two greatest Laotian cities, Luang Pabang and Vientiane, are just across the river from the Thais. The Laos are the country cousins of the Thais, as are the Black Thais of the northern Laotian hills.

And in the wild jungles of northern Thailand lurk many thousands of dissident Vietnamese who have roamed these hills since the 1954 partition. Many of these are communists. Only last week the army flushed out nearly 100 of these, well armed and controlling a substantial arsenal.

Earlier a mysterious helicopter, believed to be Russian, was shot down over the Thai jungle. The S.E.A.T.O. Security people, while acknowledging the presence of the Vietnamese irregulars, are inclined to believe that the 100 communists were produced for Johnson's visit with skilful timing.

The cease-fire lines in Laos roughly bisect the country from North to South. They leave the communists sharing a considerable stretch of border with South Vietnam. All the major cities of Laos are in the western sector, but the fact must be faced that the communists will be negotiating at Geneva from a position of great strength.

Do not be carried away by claims of massive intervention by the Red Chinese or the Communist Vietminh in Laos. Tales of six or seven battalions of outsiders operating in Laos are completely false. The fighting has been on a small, desultory and rather inefficient scale.

There is absolutely no evidence at all of direct Chinese intervention. Indeed the supply of Russian arms and munitions to the Pathet Lao forces is believed to acknowledge the deep suspicion of the Chinese throughout South-east Asia. There are undoubtedly several hundred Vietminh in technical and key positions with the Pathet Lao, who are being trained in camps in Vietminh at the rate of 300 a month. Without such training the average Lao, Kha, Yao or Meo would be incapable of loading a modern rifle.

If the battle for Laos is lost the Americans, both directly and indirectly, must shoulder the blame. The chief representative there last year (now an Under-Secretary of State) made an unholy mess of things. Moreover, such military training as the Laotians possess was given by the Americans, and the best of the troops they trained have defected to the communists.

But their most grievous error of all was in refusing to listen to the advice of men like Pote Sarasin and other Thais who urged

the holding of a conference on Laos last November, before the battle of Vientiane, when the pro-West forces were in the ascendancy.

At Geneva the West's western allies will do what they can. They propose to seek a psychological advantage by getting in first with their demands, but they know full well the magnitude of the task ahead.

"The only advantage I can see," said a noted Thai, "is that the weather will be cooler in Geneva than it is here. Everything but the weather will be much, much hotter."

I fear that once again we of the West have been outmanoeuvred in Asia largely through American unwillingness to accept other people's advice.

All that can be expected at Geneva is a compromise on Laos which in all probability will throw that unfortunate country into communist hands within a few months.

With South Vietnam harried by communist night-raiding guerillas and faced by an "emergency" on the Malayan pattern, the apprehensions of the Thais and Malayans are understandable.

"Too little and too late" has all too often been the epitaph of Western actions. Will we never learn that when facing an opponent with no scruples one cannot stick to the rules laid down by the Marquess of Queensberry?

JAPAN

THE BIGGEST CITY ON EARTH

Tokio, May 27.

This is the largest, brightest, gayest, craziest and most lethal city in the world. It is a city of the most fantastic extremes. High above it rears the great Tokio Tower, a replica of the Eiffel Tower but six feet higher, of course. The floodlighting and neon signs are such that one almost needs dark glasses at night.

It is a city thronged with 10,000,000 people, kindly, smiling, courteous people who nearly all look a little curious in shape to western eyes. Night and day hundreds of thousands of cars, many of them Japanese models, speed madly and without any semblance of order about the 18th century streets and are involved in some 400 accidents per 24 hours.

But no one is in the least perturbed. Here, as in New Zealand, traffic keeps to the left but local drivers prefer left-hand drive cars because most of the streets lack sidewalks and pedestrians comprise the greatest hazard.

For all their freedom and general vitality the Japanese appear to love regimentation. All school-children, university students included, wear uniforms of a military pattern—the boys in dark blue trousers, high-necked brass-buttoned jackets and ridiculous hats, and the girls in a parody of blazer and gym-skirt which does nothing for their stubby little thick-legged figures.

Every day one encounters long irregular queues of such children up from the country to view the big city, and all marching behind banners.

Here one can buy anything, do anything, or suffer anything. Restaurants purvey the food from 50 countries, the night-life would make even Paris a little awe-stricken, the noise and the bustle, the smog and the 24-hour-a-day traffic chariot-race rival New York. Indeed, some Americans somewhat reluctantly admit that this is worse.

Here wages are rising at the rate of 10s per week every year. Whereas in Hongkong or Singapore a linotype operator earns £2 10s a week and is happy to get it, his Japanese counterpart earns, with bonuses, £8 to £9.

But amid all this progress infuriating anachronisms remain. No one, not even a native, can find his way readily about the great sprawling metropolis. All the streets bear official names but no one uses them. The Americans strove to change this

by instituting an avenue system—Avenue A, Avenue B and so on—but the signs remain unheeded, mute testimony to a scheme that failed.

The whole city instead is divided into districts. Thus a New Plymouth man, asked his address, might say he lives at Fitzroy, near the post office. Thus the only way to get anywhere is to remember a huge landmark near your destination and set your sights on that. In practice all European and most Japanese firms issue pocket matches or visiting cards to all and sundry. On the match packet and on the reverse of the cards are stylised bi-lingual maps showing the exact locality of the building concerned. These one hands to one's taxi-driver and hopes against hope.

Just to confuse the issue still further all houses and premises bear street numbers—though no one really knows the name of the street except those living in it. But woe betide the man who expects number 1 Ginza to be next to number 2, or even number 3 Ginza. Houses are numbered strictly according to age and order of erection. The first four in one street I know are 425, 17, 74, 211.

The Japanese are strong on statistics but I do not know whether they have ever calculated either the incidence of mental disorder among postmen or the unnecessary loss of man-hours occasioned by such a system.

For the rest the Japanese are an ingenious, practical, active people with a great sense of humour. They appear, however, to lack a sound critical faculty particularly on abstract things.

They work like beavers, too, as everyone knows, but somehow all the industry seems to yield a trifling result. For example, when a dinner party I attended attracted the interest of the press, 23 news photographers from four papers spent more than an hour taking pictures. The net result was four double-column extremely posed pictures containing about as much news value as last week's Best Bets.

Tokio Shimbun, a great national daily, regularly sends five teams of eight reporters to cover the Diet proceedings. Even in my small hotel an army of more than 40 servants is needed for 20 guests.

At first glance the Japanese may appear arrant snobs, but this is not really so. A Japanese likes to know where he stands socially—whether A is inferior, superior or equal to B in the social scale. Life to every young Japanese (and his parents) is essentially a struggle—to get into the right kindergarten, lower school, middle school, high school and University. Once at the right university (Tokio or Washida) having been magnificently prepared, he can afford to coast a little and get interested in politics.

On graduation he joins public service or a big firm like Mitsubishi and the pressure is off.

Something remains still of the feudal system of the Samurai period, but the important thing to remember is that never having been anything else but independent, the Japanese regard themselves not primarily as Asians or neutrals or westerners but as Japanese. They are passionately devoted to their land—and to peace. At the moment too they are passionately devoted to freedom. The army and even the police are held in some contempt. The Japanese have had their fingers atom-burnt and have no intention of letting the process be repeated.

They know more about New Zealand than any other Asian people and find much to admire in the Dominion. (For the record Rugby is to become a compulsory school sport in 1964).

But above all they are actuated by a drive and virility that tired old Europe does not know. They are progressing at an incredible rate. Perhaps it is just as well for their competitors that their labour is wasteful and only partially organised.

Nor are they boastful. While some people and parties resent their post-war dependence on the United States there is no resentment that I have glimpsed against the victors. It seems that the Japanese have written the last war off to experience. And they are far too intelligent to make the same mistake twice.

PHILIPPINES

A GLIMPSE OF MANILA

Manila, June 3.

Last night the vast hotel lounge was jammed tight with brown-faced, noisy men in transparent, heavy-embroidered shirts worn outside their trousers. Outside the streets were gay with banners calling on all faithful Nationalists to support Puyat or Santos or some other candidate as running mate for President Garcia in his next term.

I had arrived in Manila on the eve of the Nationalist Party convention which picks its candidates for the presidential election next November.

As the Nationalists hold 86 of the 120 seats in Congress and the tide is running with President Garcia the probability is that the Nationalista candidates will be successful in November. President Garcia has now been seven years in office. (He took over as vice-president when his predecessor was assassinated). Indeed, many Filipinos believe that once re-elected he will step down and give way to his vice-president. Hence the fierceness of the campaign to choose Garcia's running mate.

The whole procedure is a faithful copy of the American system. Delegates numbering 1416 must go on voting for the vice-presidential candidate until one received a 60 per cent. majority.

The Philippines with its 27,000,000 people, boasts that it is the third largest English-speaking country in the world. In point of fact some 90 per cent of the people who in appearance resemble both the Japanese and the Thais are English-speaking. But most of them also speak Spanish or Telegu. For the Philippines have a long history of colonial rule. The Spanish were masters here for more than two centuries until the Americans received the Philippines as part of the spoils of war at the tail-end of last century.

The Spanish left a deep impression on the islands. They form the largest Christian community in Asia, almost all being of the Roman Catholic faith. As for the Americans this is the only example of a former American colony which won to freedom. The American influence remains predominant. America is the source of the model for almost every new Filipino experiment. Economic aid is still provided by the United States in generous fashion and American naval bases are still maintained in the Philippines. Yet even with this help the Government is meeting with difficulties in making ends meet.

Strict import licensing has denied New Zealand a market for mutton, although dairy produce may come in freely. Indeed the bulk of the butter and milk powder consumed by Filipinos is of New Zealand origin. How long this will continue may depend on the effect of a recent devaluation of the Philippine peso. Formerly two to the United States dollar, the peso is now three to the dollar.

This increases by half the cost of butter and other New Zealand products imported. Butter is now selling at 2.20 pesos (6s) and margarine at 1.75 pesos (4s 5d) per pound.

There is a market here for boneless New Zealand mutton for processing locally. It is far cheaper than beef but is at present rated "non-essential" by the Philippines Government. Here is a task for the New Zealand Meat Board to convince the Philippines Government that it will save substantial quantities of overseas exchange by importing New Zealand mutton in lieu of beef.

Manila is three cities merged into one, set about the delightful Manila Bay. The important streets are lined with carefully tended tamarisks and the great buildings have a strong Spanish touch. The mouldering walls of the old Spanish city are still visible, and great new blocks of flats and offices tower above the canals and three-studded parks.

But the city itself has a faintly decadent air. The high smelling streets where the Filipinos do their shopping are dirty and narrow and crammed with ornate taxi-jeeps or buggies drawn by emaciated ponies. The night clubs are more tawdry, expensive and decadent than is usual in Asia.

Indeed most Asian countries, particularly newly liberated ones, have grown puritanical about night-life. Colombo is as dead as a New Zealand provincial town on Sunday by 9.30 at night. New Delhi, very conscious of its status as a capital, is not given to gay lights and sweet music. Even in Singapore the night life is somewhat limited.

Hongkong has its hot-spots and Tokio plays as hard as it works. Indeed Tokio has become an oriental Paris. The variety of its neon lighting is staggering. Here in two-foot letters a sign 200 feet above the earth flashes out the news headlines. Others call the unwary to the "Albion," the "Latin Quarter" and a thousand and one other night spots where 10,000 "hostesses" relieve the guest of his cash. In Tokio this can be forgiven because of the vitality of the people and their manifest progress. In Manila with its countless bars, with street touts whispering coy invitations in the ears of passers-by (which would be unthinkable in Japan) there is a miasma of decay.

Yet there is an old-world charm in the footprints of history here—the churches with the patina of time upon them, the geckos chasing flies inside the shop windows, the scrawny chickens fossicking in the dust, much as they do in Barcelona or Seville and this was Magellan's first landfall in Asia. There are Corregidor and Bataan and the shell of MacArthur's headquarters and vast statues of Rizal, martyred by the Spanish 71 years ago.

The brown faced people are happy and friendly. In the cool of the evening they walk and play in the wide green tree-studded parks along the foreshore but after Tokio and Hongkong and even Taipeh there is an indolence about them and a slap-dash approach. In my plush hotel the lifts don't work, except sporadically; on the shining tables is a film of dust; the Filipino houseboys, willing though they are, take 50 per cent longer to execute an order than do the Japanese or Chinese. The service in a first-class hotel for tourists is a useful indication of national characteristics.

I like the Filipinos but they will never be among my favourite Asians. I still recall the Thais clasping their hands at chin height as in prayer as they farewelled me, and the "sayonaras" of my Japanese friends.

But perhaps I am prejudiced because of the heat and the frank bias of all the extraordinarily well produced newspapers on sale here. I suspect that beneath the surface corruption is rife. Indeed this is perhaps the only Asian capital I have visited which seems to lack purpose and a vision of the future.

But as I look out across the city to the bright lights twinkling, to floodlit vessels in Manila Bay, I wonder if maybe the heat is getting me down. Perhaps the Filipinos do not want to be involved in the rat-race to progress. Perhaps they are happier the way they are.

Below me comes a burst of massed laughter. The boys from the Nationalista convention must be back. The vice-presidential election got no further than the first ballot. They must start all over again in the morning. And if that laughter means anything they'll be out on the town tonight.

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC

SINGAPORE

ELECTION IN SINGAPORE

Singapore, April 29.

It is impossible not to fall in love with Singapore at first sight, even if, as I did, one arrives at one's hotel in a torrential downpour that reduced the temperature momentarily to the high 80's. I can best illustrate this by saying that within 36 hours of arrival I was crouching round a radio amid a party of influential Chinese and Indian Singaporeans (one of them a prominent Opposition politician) listening with keen interest to the results of the Hong Lim by-election for the Singapore Parliament.

This was no ordinary election. Hong Lim is in the very heart of Chinatown, an area of narrow streets, for the most part cluttered with noisy and odoriferous street stalls, peopled by friendly, attractive and most colourful people whose social status and opulence can be read at a glance from the type of clothing they wear.

Particularly is this true of the women. The emancipated westernised young ladies dress much as their white sisters in Darwin or Whangarei. The poorer people wear gay cotton pyjamas (samfu), the jacket worn over the trousers, and are usually barefoot. The Cantonese amah affects wide black trousers, slippers and a white tunic.

A few young ladies cling to the lovely cheongsam, a richly embroidered dress that buttons up at the neck and is slit up both sides. The young and attractive allow the slit to extend provocatively half way up the thigh.

Because Singapore is a tight little island some 22 miles by 17, elections to Parliament, which is paramount on all matters but defence and foreign affairs, resemble local body polls rather than general elections.

Hong Lim, in which 11,000 voters live, will fit comfortably into Fitzroy, leaving room to spare for the Tiger Balm Gardens.

Here ended today a fantastic by-election campaign of enormous significance to Singapore. At first sight there were none of the ingredients of drama. The P.A.P., the extremely left-wing People's Action Party, under the leadership of the Cambridge-educated, golf-playing Lee Kuan Yew, held all but 13 seats of the 51-strong house. On the surface it couldn't matter less what happened in Hong Lim.

But consider the contestants—Ong Eng Guan, 36, former P.A.P. treasurer and Cabinet Minister and mayor of Singapore, and Jek Yuen Thong, 31, Premier's secretary and present

treasurer of P.A.P. So the ballot papers printed it (in four languages) but the ballot papers were wrong. The contest was a straight personal fight between Ong and Premier Lee Kuan Yew.

It happened like this. Ong was a promising politician. As soon as he was given a portfolio he published a 250,000,000-dollar housing scheme without the authority of P.A.P. which also lacked the money to implement it. That set the cat among the pigeons. Ong was variously accused of nepotism, fiddling with funds and inefficiency and was made the subject of parliamentary disciplinary action.

But with exquisite timing Ong resigned his seat 15 minutes before the hearing was due to be begin. And was therefore untouchable.

When the by-election writs were issued Ong presented himself as an Independent, and the P.A.P. put up his successor as treasurer. From that point the battle was joined. For seven weeks, daily increasing in intensity, the campaign reached a crescendo as I was flying over the Timor Sea.

The P.A.P. turned out all its heaviest artillery. The Prime Minister, who began by making one address a week, ended with exhorting the constituents twice daily. All Singapore knew this was no ordinary election — but a trial of strength between Ong and Lee, with young Jek merely the pretext for the squabble. Meanwhile Ong with a small team of lieutenants campaigned with extraordinary skill in the little district where he has a "favourite son" following.

I went round the booths this morning with the Ceylon Tamil chief reporter of the Straits Times. Every booth was beset by queues with hundreds of interested lookers-on for today is Saturday and in addition an Indian holiday. I remarked the scrupulous care to ensure that the election was fairly run, and saw the rival candidates on their tour round the booths.

Late at night came the news that Ong had coasted home by nearly 5000 votes, thus administering a sharp rebuff to the P.A.P. and proving again that not even a massive and highly efficient party machine can change the voters' minds against a favourite son with an independent mind.

Now all Singapore is speculating on the sequel. Will Lee Kuan Yew step down from the leadership because he has lost face? Will he reverse his policy of moderation towards the British bases in Singapore and revert to the fire-eating crypto-communism which carried him to power?

Overall, it will be a grave pity if he does. I have talked to his followers and his enemies. All admit that the P.A.P. is perhaps the most honest government in Asia, that despite its

mistakes it has a dynamic driving force that is changing the face of Singapore.

Vast multi-floored flats are going up at a fantastic rate to house these 1,500,000 islanders. Schooling has been made compulsory and schools are working double and triple shifts to cater for all children.

Because Singapore's traditional trading with its neighbours is dwindling as other States build their own industries, Lee Kuan Yew has struck a truce with the unions who have agreed to support heavy industrialisation, with the aid of foreign capital.

But despite all these efforts, Singapore is fighting a losing battle and every Singaporean knows it. There is only one solution, a merger with the Federation of Malaya.

The P.A.P. realises this. That is why the official language of Singapore is Malay, though nearly 90 per cent. of the people are Chinese.

But it takes two to make a merger, and Tunku Abdul Rahman's Malaya wants no such marriage. In Malaya the Malays may have the semblance of power, but the real rulers are the Chinese minority with whom the Tunku is allied. To admit Singapore would be to increase greatly the Chinese ingredient to the eventual undoing of the easy-going Malays, who cannot compete with the clever and industrious Chinese.

The merger must come one day, though maybe not until Malaya's Chinese grow militant. Meanwhile in the half-light of partial self-government Lee Kuan Yew's P.A.P. party provides Singapore with its best hope of survival.

Despite Ong Eng Guan's sensational success which released a fantastic fusillade of firecrackers in Hong Lim tonight.

PAKISTAN

BASIC DEMOCRACIES

Karachi, May 9.

The essential things to remember about Pakistan's scheme of Basic Democracies is that it is designed to build an informed electorate—by working from the bottom—that it combines into one stream the functions of local and national government, and that it is tailored to fit a population only 15 per cent. of which is literate in any language.

After partition Pakistan, which had a profound respect for the Mother of Parliaments, strove unsuccessfully to transplant a purely Anglo-Saxon democracy in the Orient. These attempts failed miserably through lack of dedicated leaders and of a parliamentary tradition, but most of all through concentrating on the outward trappings of democracy and ignoring the substance.

It was left to President Ayub Khan to disclose the rottenness of the facade, to sweep the nastiness away and to replace it with a scheme that begins, as all good edifices must, with laying sound foundations.

There are five tiers or storeys in the edifice. At the lowest level neighbouring villages are grouped in two's or three's to give a total population of from 10 to 15,000. Then on adult suffrage all villagers over 21 elect members, one to every ward of 1000 people. These elected members of the Union Council, as it is called, are reinforced by half their number of appointed members, citizens in good standing or even people defeated at the polls.

The council has executive, judicial and social functions. It can, with the concurrence of a Divisional Commission, levy taxes on land, real estate, on goods and trade and charge for registration of births, deaths and marriages. It has indeed the rate-levying powers of a borough council. But the council's powers extend into the judicial field since it appoints a three-man Union Adalat (or Court) to administer justice. Such courts may be likened to the justice of the peace system.

The aim is to teach largely illiterate villagers the basis of government by concentrating on local problems and conditions which all understand. In the cities the councils are called committees and work on a somewhat different pattern since there is a higher percentage of literacy there. In the whole of Pakistan there are more than 7100 Union councils and in the cities 880 Union committees. Some 15 per cent. of the members of these are illiterate.

The second storey in Basic Democracy is, in the West, the Tehsil Council and, in the East the Thana or Sub-divisional Council. The structure is precisely the same as that of the Union Council. Tehsil Councils are formed of the chairmen of all the Union Councils in the subdivision. These comprise half the membership, the rest being nominated or appointed members, as before.

The third tier, the District Council, is perhaps the nub of the scheme. The average district contains from 1,000,000 to 4,000,000 people, there being 70 in all. At least half the District Council members are Union Council chairmen, the rest being public servants at the district level and other persons nominated for special purposes. In Karachi, for instance, there are appointed representatives of trade unions, commerce, minorities and so forth.

The District Council is a policy-making body, governing development in the district. Its compulsory functions include the maintenance of schools, libraries, public gardens, playgrounds and the promotion of reconstruction programmes and agricultural improvement campaigns. It is also responsible for roading, sanitation and health administration, thus combining the New Zealand roles of borough council, and hospital and education boards.

The fourth storey is the Divisional Council, presided over by a District Commissioner, and charged with the task of co-ordinating the work of Union Councils and Committees. Three-quarters of the members represent government departments, municipalities, etc., together with nominated non-officials. The remaining quarter come from the chairmen of the Union Councils.

Last stage of all is the Provincial Advisory Council, one in the East, another in the West. Two thirds of these councils are made up of top ranking officials and non-official appointees. The remainder as before are elected from below.

It is all very neat and orderly. Perhaps too much so. The aim is that as education improves the elected ingredient of the five tiers will grow greater until it finally swallows up the nominated and official portions.

Now the plan has advanced a stage further with the completion of a draft constitution, geared to basic democracy, by a commission set up for the purpose. The gist of this 280-page document has not yet been published but there are strong indication that it will propose a federal system of two provinces, which Ayub is believed to favour. Ayub, however, will have the final word. When the constitution becomes operative parliamentary democracy will be restored, the Provincial Legislatures taking the place of the last tier on the basic democratic pyramid. A Federal Government will then preside over-all.

It must be apparent that the system makes for a one-party government, at least to begin with.

Yesterday I spent a highly informative hour with the director of the Basic Democracies plan, Mr. A. O. Raziur-Rahman, who is a high official in the Bureau of National Reconstruction. He was later joined by a permanent head of the whole ministry and by Mr. H. M. Habibullah, who is something of a showpiece. He (Mr. Habibullah) is vice-chairman of the Karachi Municipal (or District) Council and has advanced to tier four in the edifice by election. Step by step 1300 elected Karachi councillors were whittled down to 30, of whom Mr. Habibullah was appointed vice-chairman to a civic servant chairman (or mayor). All three admitted that when the constitution is promulgated a new meaning will be given to the whole scheme. They believe, too, that parties will develop as soon as Parliament sits and differences can be ventilated.

All are carried away by the magnitude of the scheme. "It is an adventure in talent-seeking," one official told me. "It is both rewarding and frustrating."

The frustrations are easy to guess. A comprehensive breakdown has been made of the 3000 chairmen elected to the Union Councils in East Pakistan. Of these 27 per cent. had matriculated, 65 per cent. were literate but below matriculation standard and eight per cent. illiterate. Fifteen per cent. were upper middle class, and 35 per cent. lower class. Of about 80,000 council members elected throughout the land 12,600 or 15.8 per cent. were illiterates.

Herein lies the first hitch. Education in government is provided for all council members. Here the illiterates are at a disadvantage and must tend to slow down progress.

How is the scheme working? On the whole surprisingly well. There is a lack of co-ordination in the training of council members in the arts of government and a sad lack of the necessary finance at all levels. Here and there signs of the old corruption are apparent, so that it will not be surprising if President Ayub Khan presently carries out a minor civil service purge to encourage the others. But the people have faith in the plan.

My bearer Munsif is a Pathan from Rawalpindi where his wife and six children reside. He earns 50 rupees (less than £4 a month) plus tips for a week of from 70 to 80 hours. His army son earns 30 rupees a month, and keep.

To such people Basic Democracy will lead to the Holy Grail.

Said Munsif, a literate man: "Wait five years, sahib, and it will be all right. You good people in Commonwealth who

keep us—New Zealand, Australia, British, Americans—won't need to help no more. Just five years, sahib, then it will be good, very good. Maybe," he added wistfully, "as good as when the British were here."

But then Munsif is a diehard conservative who likes his sahibs to have white skins.

KASHMIR

Tale Of Far Kashmir

New Delhi. May 12.

"I'll sing thee songs of Araby and tales of far Kashmir."

I heard both in Pakistan and Kashmir tales in India. I am now thoroughly convinced that the Kashmir problem is as insoluble as it ever was, that no one on either side, except possibly Mr. Nehru himself, wants it solved and that relations between these two nations which were born of one nation are as brittle and strained as ever they were.

Yet I have found no reluctance to discuss the problems dividing them. In Pakistan there is luke-warm approval for the solution to the Five Rivers problem. "A compromise" they call it which preserves the status quo for five years during which time, at enormous expense, Pakistan must build the canal system to take the waters and solve the problem of the excessive salinity of its desert soil.

Daily the papers report "incidents" within Indian-held Kashmir — 188 casualties last month. Moreover every Pakistani is convinced that the Kashmiri are repressed Moslems fretting beneath an oppressor's yoke and waiting only a suitable moment to explode.

While I was in Karachi, Dawn came out with a two and a-half-column leader, highly inflammatory in nature, which compared Indian-held Kashmir to Cuba, praised President Kennedy for the courageous but abortive Cuban "invasion," and told Pakistanis they should be doing something similar to help their oppressed brothers. As all Pakistani papers reflect Government policy, this could well be the Government line, shorn of the more belligerent trimmings.

In India I have found a universal conviction that Pakistan is keeping the Kashmir issue alive solely as a national rallying cry. Pakistan, they say, was born of hate and must keep its separated peoples united by such devices, which are an outworn political strategy.

They admit that in the early days of the Ayub Khan regime a conscious effort was made to improve relations but believe that the feeling between the two powers is as acute as it ever was. Mr. Nehru told me of the numerous incidents, the blowing up of culverts and bridges often with loss of life. Asked whether the very trifling nature of the incidents did not suggest that they were merely the defiance of individuals, he made it clear that India had established that most of the acts were inspired.

The 64-dollar question is what does the future hold. On this the Indians are more realistic than the Pakistanis. The latter see no solution but a spontaneous uprising of Kashmir's Moslems. I pointed out that every passing month lessened the possibility of this occurring because of the inspired migration of Indians to the Indian sector, but they were unconcerned. They place all their reliance on the Azad regime in the north and the effluxion of time.

As I see it there are only three possible solutions to the problem, if one discounts force.

One is the stabilisation of the present lines of occupation, and the de facto and finally the de jure recognition of these.

The second is an independent Kashmir protected by both India and Pakistan.

The third is a condominium.

All three I discussed on both sides of the border. The Pakistanis will have none of them. They want all Kashmir.

The Indians discount a condominium on the grounds that it would only defer the issue. They are lukewarm on an independent Kashmir, for rather vague reasons which cloak their reluctance to cede that strategic territory.

They have no intention of agreeing to the plebiscite which Nehru originally proposed. That idea was abandoned in 1949 for reasons that fail to convince. The real reason for the abandonment is that India knows that the predominantly Moslem Kashmir would vote on religious grounds.

India now favours a stabilisation of the existing zones as a basis of settlement, but not in Ayub Khan's present mood. Nor does the idea of a common market or customs union hold much appeal. The time is not ripe, they say.

One is left with the impression that India, as the man in possession of the Vale of Kashmir, is quite prepared to let time solve the issue in a manner that must be favourable to India. Never have I found an Indian ready to admit anything illegal, equivocal or inconsistent in India's attitude. There are such Indians, notably a gentleman called Mirza Beg, now spiritedly defending himself against a charge of conspiracy. But this is the pattern. Anyone who disagrees with the Indian view must, as a logical sequel, be a Pakistani agent. The Pakistanis are the aggressors, various United Nations resolutions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Indeed the atmosphere is so completely poisoned that except in the case of a few gifted and detached Indians, the mere mention of anything to do with Pakistan, particularly a favour-

able mention, causes instant deprecation of everything that has been done there and the immediate production of a superior Indian achievement.

For example India's Panchayat Raj scheme, a village council project dug out of the past and roughly resembling the bottom tier of Pakistan's basic democracies is in Indian eyes immeasurably the better scheme of the two, although no reason has been adduced to prove it.

There is also a tendency to accuse any dissident minority leader in the whole of India, notably Tara Singh, a leading Sikh, of being a Pakistani agent.

For my money there is little likelihood of a permanent and satisfactory solution to this problem in the next decade.

BURMA, LAND OF REBELLION

Rangoon. May 15.

To New Zealanders Burma is a forgotten land. Since Burma became the first country voluntarily to quit the Commonwealth she has become in New Zealand eyes a political backwater and in the words of one Burmese politician a third-rate power when it comes to receiving Colombo Plan aid.

But Burma is a land with strengths and problems of its own. It is a land with the highest literary rate among males in all Asia west of Japan. It is the land where women are so free from womanly bondage still so common in Asia that the wife keeps her own name after marriage. And it is a land with peculiar problems which seldom reach the main pages of the world's newspapers.

How many New Zealanders, for instance, are aware that Burma has constantly on its hand four or five rebellions of varying gravity? Chief of these is the long-drawn-out defiance of the Karen people, the darlings of the British who would like nothing better than to have the British back and failing that are campaigning to the point of open rebellion for a separate Karen State.

Then too the Shan states are also in open turmoil. The day I arrived a Shan headman was shot dead by a rebel gang masquerading as policemen.

In the hills near the Chinese border (freshly realigned as a result of Sino-Burmese talks), communist guerillas are active, fed and nourished from the north. Most are Chinese and because of the nature of the country they are very difficult to catch.

But most infuriating of all is the campaign being waged by a group of Chinese Nationalists, owing allegiance to Chiang Kai-Shek. These were in the news a year or so ago when a United Nations resolution ordered their repatriation. Half a force of about 12,000 were withdrawn forthwith, and others followed later but some 1200 still remain.

The Burmese claim to have evidence that these have recently been reinforced and that they are being supplied from across the Thailand border with brand new American arms.

The purpose of this Formosan adventure seems obscure. One would imagine that its only aim could be to discomfort the communists across Burma's border, but when I asked U Raschid, the Minister of Industries and Commerce, whether it was not possible to set communist Chinese against Chiang's Chinese and so neutralise two rebellions at once, he shook his head decisively.

"We're pretty sure they sometimes co-operate. It's difficult to understand."

U Nu, the Premier restored to power after 18 months of military rule, is not universally beloved by the Burmese despite the ornate pagoda he built in honour of Buddha. There is an indecision and an Asian sketchiness about much of the projects begun in Burma that does not flatter the leadership. His chief claim to his people's affection is the firm fight he has made to quell the various rebellions. In this he has played the cards in a somewhat weak hand with considerable skill.

For the rest, Burma is struggling, as she would be doing with or without U Nu. She has adequate rice, fish and vegetables for her needs, some oil revenues from Burma Oil installations and considerable resources of tin, nickel and copper as yet only lightly exploited. Yet she is always in balance of payment difficulties.

Her thinking, as with all Asia, is along the lines of spectacular projects, usually with impressive buildings. Little thought is given to the difficulty of keeping the projects moving efficiently once they are begun. U Raschid as Minister of Industries and Commerce could reasonably be blamed for this but it would be unfair to do so. He adopts the unusual attitude in a commerce minister of insisting that a revitalised Burmese agriculture must come first.

He is fond of citing New Zealand as an example. He paints New Zealand as a country which concentrated on agriculture until agriculture had become wealthy enough to support industry.

On the education front Burma has a 16-year plan which appears to be working reasonably well. By 1970 it hopes to have compulsory primary education; by 1977 compulsory secondary education. In the villages the monks are teaching most children to read but thereafter they lack reading material. The Government is attempting to supply this.

It is also working maternal and child welfare schemes of a simple sort and for this has stepped up its output of doctors to 100 a year. The difficulty is going to be to encourage these doctors to go into the country where they are most needed.

In their hearts the Burmans I met of all races, and they are better than to have the British back and failing that are campaign-all Burmans however hard the true Burmese strive to make things difficult for outsiders, are more than a little sorry that the first flush of freedom drove them into excesses. Many regret that Burma left the Commonwealth. This is not to say that there is any likelihood of Burma applying for re-election. Burma's understandable apprehension of China would prevent this, and history does not work by looking over the shoulder at lost opportunities.

The spate of nationalisation of the teak and other industries which followed freedom is also deeply regretted. The teak concerns moved to Borneo and left the Burmese to run their own show in their happy, haphazard way.

Politically Burma is wedded to neutralism because, intensely though she dislikes the thought, she is tied economically to India, and because her proximity to China gives her no other choice. But she must do something soon to improve her relations with her other neighbours — Thailand and Malaya, particularly with Thailand.

Her problems are the problems of all Asia. Like all new countries she felt that independence demanded the immediate possession of certain things—an international airport and airline, an iron and steel mill, a plan for industrialisation. But like many another nation she has tried to put on the roof before the concrete in the foundations has set.

One of the lessons Asia is learning very, very slowly is that industrialisation today is not Russian built steel mills, or Canadian built reactors. It is the human material that runs them, and keeps them running. To Asia such men and women are a thousand times more important than the throng of half-baked intellectuals being turned out by the universities who are much too superior to wield any tool or instrument larger than a fountain pen.

Maintenance men are the crying need of all Asia and of Burma more than most.

THAILAND

VENICE OF THE FAR EAST

Bangkok, May 18.

This incredible city of Bangkok with its skyline of graceful temple spires is nothing but a vast paddy. For miles on each side of the city the delta of the great Chao Phya River is a soggy plain criss-crossed by drainage canals.

Bangkok itself and the old capital of Thunbwu across the river are an Asian Venice. Green-watered canals flank the roadways and streets. Because the water table is only a foot or so from the surface nearly every home has a pond. Only by building such ponds can dry land be created for house building. On the main arteries of the city the canals are being filled in to make wide highways. In so doing the authorities are creating drainage problems for the future.

This morning to get an inkling of the way the Thais live outside the Europeanised city I travelled for three hours by launch about these canals and visited the floating market.

Here on the turgid yellow waters thousands of Thais live, marry and die on sampans, barges and lighters. Great ferry boats steam upriver into the interior carrying numbers of saffron robed priests and home-going countrymen. In the tributary canals the school bus is a canoe. Here and there, at 7.30 a.m. a small blue-skirted girl with bag across shoulder paddled her own canoe to school.

All along the canal sides the temples, the houses and shops and boat factories fronted the water in which a thousand Thai housewives were busily performing the daily wash and thousands of naked children were swimming like minnows. On the canals the housewives went a-shopping by canoe, buying their needs from the canal-side shops or from the floating shops—which sold mangoes, or banana leaves for wrapping paper, or charcoal for cooking, or even cooked meals.

Women were busily weaving the attractive sunhats worn by the Thais; a dyeworks had its cloth hung out to dry and all the time gay panoplied launches chugged to and fro with as many as nine barges in tow bearing rice, rubber or teak for the world's markets.

We stopped often, here to get a sun hat repaired; there to visit the Temple of Dawn—but nowhere were we pestered by these friendly people to buy.

Every half-mile or so we passed a school from which hundreds of blue and white uniformed children emerged to wave and cheer us. For this was no vista of slums and poverty. The

riverside houses in weather boards and roofed with palms, or corrugated iron or Siamese tiles were no hovels. They bore street numbers and are visited daily by the river postman. Through the open doors one could see refrigerators and radios and on the roofs of many were television aerials.

Coconut groves ran down to the water's edge where there were no houses, and smaller canals, like minor streets, ran off the larger waterway down which we travelled.

And everywhere there were smiles and hand-waving and a natural friendliness.

En route the launch stopped at the boatsheds where the King's eight barges are stored. These are vast canoes of teak, as much as 120 feet long with the traditional Thai blue-gloss and gold-leaf work on bow and stern. Once a year only the barges take to water when the King makes a formal tour of the river. We passed, too, through 20 or 30 vessels of the Royal Thai Navy, most of which, I must admit, had a pre-1939 look.

The abiding memory not only of the river journey but also of my three days in Bangkok is of the people themselves. Here is an Asian race which, having never been colonial, has no chip on its shoulder about colour or race, is always ready to joke and laugh and has a natural grace and courtesy.

Within five minutes of my reaching my de luxe hotel the five servants responsible for my comfort were unpacking my things, fetching me iced water or towels to a gay cross-examination about New Zealand, the number of my children and the most intimate details of New Zealand life.

As for the Thai women, they are surely the most exquisite creatures in Asia, clinging to all that is best in their ancient lore. For festive dress, as for seven centuries past, Thai ladies have a special colour for every day of the week. Yellow, for example, is Tuesday's colour; green is Wednesday's; brown or orange Thursday's.

I can hear New Zealand women of my acquaintance saying: "Heavens, but I can never wear green or mauve or scarlet."

The Thais have no such problems, for all Thais are sloe-eyed and raven-haired.

Of all the countries I have visited in Asia this is the land which has most captured my fancy. What if it is ruled by an autocracy that changes to another autocracy when the ruling regime's appetite is sated? What if the Prime Minister's street always gets priority in paving and various Prime Ministers have waxed fat on the proceeds of night clubs and rackets? What if the hotel I lived in was built on the loot collected by the mistress of the Japanese commander during the war?

The Thais laugh this sort of thing aside. When a new coup displaces the Government they say cynically, "Another crop of hungry mosquitoes," and go about their business happily and entirely unconcerned.

The only thing that furrows their smooth olive brows is the threat to their ancient independence posed by the weak "vessels" about their borders—Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam. They have sound reasons for their concern.

FORMOSA

TOOTHBRUSHES IN TAIWAN

Taipeh (Taiwan). May 23.

Above the immaculate lead sink hung a line of small hand-towels and a row of eight toothbrushes suspended on nails. These prosaic things were the symbols of a bloodless revolution in which more than 6,000,000 peasant farmers in Taiwan have been given a new vision of life and of independence.

Much has been written for and against the Chinese communist system of farming by communes, but all too little of the remarkable programme of rural remonstruction in Free China which has given the Taiwan farmer a higher living standard and level of production than is enjoyed by any other smallholder in Asia.

The great reconstruction plan areas began on the mainland in 1949 and continued in Taiwan after the communist victory. It has been helped enormously by generous American aid, and to this day two of the five commissioners administering the scheme are Americans. But the bulk of the work and inspiration derives from the Chinese people themselves.

The scheme has been carried out in three phases and has been based on Sun Yat-sen's programme for returning the land to the tiller. Phase one was in automatic reduction of farm rents to no more than 37.5 per cent. per annum of the yield of the tenant farmer's main crop. If this was rice, his crop of tobacco or cabbage or sweet potatoes was "free."

Stage two was the sale of all usable crown land to tenant farmers, the land being sold at two and a-half times the value of the average annual yield, and being limited in extent to about two and a-half acres per farmer.

Stage three in the land-to-tiller programme, which was implemented in a single year, 1953, involved the limitation of the area held by absentee landlords to about seven and a-half acres. Anything in excess of this figure was bought by the State at two and a-half times the cost of the average annual output and sold on 10-year mortgages to farmers at the same price. Farmers with larger holdings than this can continue to work them — provided they employ no labour outside their immediate families. All land purchased by the Government was paid for partly in shares in Government-sponsored industry, thus helping the industrialisation programme.

By these means the Free China Government has revolutionised Ilha Formosa's (the Beautiful Island's) economy. Today 86 per cent. of the agricultural land is owned by the farmers them-

selves. The remaining 14 per cent. consists of holdings of less than seven and a-half acres still farmed under tenancy agreements.

New Zealanders who read this will marvel at any agricultural programme built on a basic unit of two and a-half acres. What must be remembered is that the Taiwan farmers are crop-growers, not graziers. Their soil is extremely fertile, resembling New Zealand in many respects, and there is a high rainfall which makes it possible for the Taiwanese to grow four crops a year.

Two of these crops, in spring and in autumn, are of rice. The summer and winter sowings are of subsidiary crops — rape, wheat, flax, tobacco, soy-beans and similar crops. By these means the Taiwan family unit, usually about six in number, contrives to make a comfortable living.

But this state of affairs did not come to pass overnight. Considerable education of a specialised kind was needed to sell the farmers the idea of improved methods of crop rotation, the correct use of fertilisers and of pest control and other matters.

Right at the base of the scheme lies a health scheme, a combination of the New Zealand district nurse scheme and the Plunket Society's work. At hundreds of clinics complete medical services, aimed at prevention rather than at cure, are working smoothly. Sanitation and cleanliness form an important part of this work and specialists continued to visit farmhouses until the farmers were converted to the new approach.

This brings me back to the tooth-brushes. I visited a dozen farmers' homes, many of which I chose at random. At all I found concreted backyards and an extremely high standard of personal and household cleanliness. Yet these were simple homes, mainly of brick and floored with a rough concrete wash on which the bed platforms stood. One room, more elaborately furnished, held the family shrine to the family ancestors. But in these simple homes the spirit of the whole scheme was almost a living thing.

At the same time farm advisers visit the farmers to discuss their individual problems. Such is the approach of these men, who have the same dedicated attitude of the New Zealand ministry officials opening up the lands west of Taupo, that the farming population of Taiwan listens willingly, even eagerly, to their advice, and the innate conservatism of peasant farmers all over the world has been conquered.

Some measure of the prosperity of these two-bit farmers can be gauged from the fact that every home I entered contained both a radio and one or more bicycles. Some farms had tiny two-stroke tractors; all had special enclosures for such livestock as hens, ducks and pigs.

Each village elects its own farmers' association — the key to the whole scheme. Each association employs a score or more of permanent officials, including a veterinarian who among his other duties, directs the artificial insemination of sows.

Through the associations (317 in number) the farmers may buy in return for produce their fertiliser, implements and even radios at cost, and can even mill the rice they need for their own use. All fertiliser is manufactured by the State in seven works producing superphosphate, nitro-chalk, urea, ammonium sulphate and other chemical manures. The farmers' associations are entitled to charge a small commission on such sales, a commission which covers the cost of the associations' work.

Farmers pay only 40 per cent. of the fertiliser price on sowing and the balance after the harvest. The associations, too, take delivery and act as the Government's agent for rice and other crops harvested. Much of this rice is more or less permanently stored in the association's silos and released on the Government's order to bring down the retail price of rice should it ever get too high. Through the associations, too, farmers may obtain loans for any productive improvements, but not for housing.

Housing must be financed out of the farmers' savings, although a scheme exists whereby he can buy his cement one year, his bricks the next, his tiles the year after, and delay delivery until he is ready to build.

Housing must be financed out of the farmer's savings, and of the farmers' prosperity, and I have to record that in the 100 square miles I covered between Taiwan and Taoynan (the place of peaches) fully half the farm houses were built in brick instead of tin and mud and banana-leaf roofing that was the pattern before 1950. I am assured that in the whole island the figures for new farm housing are even higher.

The farmers' associations are also actively engaged as farm advice clinics and farm extension centres. The work of the latter falls into three parts. The first is re-educating those farmers who are literate only in Japanese. (Remember that Japan owned Taiwan for 50 years until 1945 and enforced the teaching of Japanese). The second activity is the 4H movement for young farmers, built on the American model and resembling our young farmers' clubs. The third concentrates on training the women and girls in sanitation, child-care and home management. Primary education is compulsory from the age of six for six years.

Although this article by no means exhausts the list of activities carried on under the rural reconstruction scheme, it should give you an idea of its comprehensive nature.

Now Free China is to tackle the problem of marginal or hill lands. Already a New Zealand expert, Dr. John Hercus, has spent four months here studying conditions with a view to report-

ing on prospects. The Taiwan people propose to use their marginal land for grazing and to establish a dairy industry. Already they are exporting sugar, rice and fruit to Japan and elsewhere.

Too little is known of this bloodless agricultural revolution outside Taiwan. Greater publicity would show the outside world that the Free Chinese have evolved something healthier and more successful than the communist communes. Already teams from Taiwan are at work in South Vietnam teaching their rural techniques.

This vast scheme, more than anything else I saw in the Beautiful Island, showed me that Taiwan is no mere free fortress with an aging army against communism but a living, vital, progressive community which by the sensible use of American technical and financial aid has given nearly 11,000,000 people a new vision and a new deal.

JAPAN

CONVENTION IN TOKIO

Tokio. May 31.

When the Emperor and Empress of Japan graciously agreed to open the 52nd convention of Rotary International they gave some indication of the earnestness of the official Japanese intention to use the convention as a means of securing some spectacular publicity for their country, its charms and its progress.

Everything is geared to the convention.

The streets are gay with welcoming banners. Free buses transport delegates hither and yon. Treasured items in Japan's heritage, song and dance now reserved only for guests of the Imperial Court, have been produced for the delectation of visitors.

Japanese Rotarians in their tens of thousands have flocked to these displays, which only once or twice in a life-time do they get a chance to see.

Gagaku dancing, for instance, has not been performed publicly for centuries and has endured in its present form since the seventh century.

The accompanying orchestra uses the five instruments of the period — primitive flutes and oboes, big and small drums and a curious upright reed instrument called a sho. The dances themselves are simple but the costumes rich and breathtaking beyond description.

The opening of the convention was held in a vast circular hall on Hairumi, a reclaimed island in Tokio Bay. The great hemispherical roof can be opened in sections to give a glimpse of the sky.

In this enormous dome some 20,000 people stood to attention as the imperial couple moved to their appointed places and thereafter, except when the occasion demanded movement, sat stiff and immobile, like wax effigies of themselves.

They were dressed quietly in western style and the Emperor spoke clearly and lucidly for some five minutes.

Soon afterwards the royal pair left in an impressive silence. While they remained every speaker on the rostrum bowed deeply before speaking to the royal guests.

Some measure of Japanese business acumen can be gauged from the fact that as delegates entered the hall they were offered the use of transistor radios and field glasses.

Both were necessary unless one was bilingual and had telescopic eyes for the rostrum was as much as 100 yards from the audience.

On the transistor radio one could pick up through earphones the simultaneous translation of the Japanese speeches into English and vice-versa. At the end of the meeting one could purchase either the transistor or the field glasses for about £5 or return them.

The whole of the vast Imperial Hotel has been set aside for Rotarians and its public rooms as Rotary clubrooms.

There hundreds of kimono-clad lovelies, with exquisite manners and collectively speaking most of the world's languages, cater for the visitors' needs. No detail has been omitted to make for the visitors' comfort.

In the hotel lounge temporary Japanese gardens have been built which are breathtaking. In the great dining-room, converted into a "House of Friendship," perpetual tea-drinking ceremonies take place.

And all over the city struggle laden husbands with gay parcels. In terms of trade no one can compute what this festive week has meant to the city's stores. It has done even more for Japan's prestige as a mature, supremely efficient nation.

The Japanese regard this convention as a curtain-raiser for the 1964 Olympic Games, to be staged in the city. By that time they intend to double the number of available western style hotel rooms — from 8000 to 16,000.

Since 67 nations are represented at this convention they could not have a more fruitful field for showing their wares.

The Japanese are no longer mere imitators. Their cars and buses and manufactured goods are now of their own design. Their optical glass is as good as any in the world, their colour television is undoubtedly the world's best.

I have seen the finished article and watched the programmes being made and can assure you that the colour clarity and veracity is at least as good as those in a first-class colour film.

The sole flaw is that even in Japan a colour receiver costs £400.

CAN ASIA STAY FREE?

Tokio, June 1.

The A.P. man, the Reuter man and the U.P.I. man, their names all household words where journalists foregather, showed me to a seat, called for beer and settled down to a cosy chat. "Well," said A.P., "what are your views so far? Do you also agree that Asia is lost?" This was a startling opening.

But worse was to follow. The Reuter man, whose name is Chipp, who was the first Westerner to interview the heads of the Peking regime in China, has a wandering role in Asia. English in background and speech, he nevertheless acts so like Hollywood's version of the top foreign correspondent that you fall to wondering whether the pose began as a gimmick and has since been unconsciously assumed.

When I answered the A.P. man's question cautiously (for after all my business is to ask, not to answer questions) Reuter waved my answer aside.

"Asia's a dead duck, we've frittered Laos away, South Vietnam's next on the delivery line; Indonesia is about as stable as a suitcase full of nitro-glycerine. Burma has four rebellions on U Nu's hands and he's losing the lot."

"That wasn't my impression," I demurred.

"Never believe what they tell you—if the news is good," said Reuter.

"Last week the Thai Foreign Minister talked to me in a way I didn't like about the benefits of neutralism. And if Thailand goes the hinge fall off the gate."

Reuter quaffed mightily at his beer. "Asia, I say, is a dead duck."

"South-east Asia, old boy. I'll go along with you that far," said A.P.

"The whole boiling," said Reuter expansively, whereupon we proceeded to argue it out.

The discussion failed entirely to convince me that their gloomy prognostications may prove true. Newspaper correspondents are human sponges, absorbing news and impressions from all sources. They suffer in this area from satiety of news and impressions, and need now and then to return to the United Kingdom or the United States to wring out the moisture and evalulate it. I said as much that morning and received a modified approval from the three men concerned.

But while I could not and cannot agree entirely that the West's battle for Asia is lost, I left the meeting profoundly disturbed—partly because of the threat of such a loss, partly because three world famous correspondents representing the three great English-speaking news agencies in the area should have yielded to defeatism.

The dangers inherent in such an attitude must be obvious. Can men in such a mood, men with their minds made up, be trusted in their interpretation of the meaning of events?

Have we lost Asia, we of the West? Not necessarily tomorrow or next year but in the next 20 years? To some extent the triumvirate's fears are justified, for it is a thousand to one chance that by 1980 Asia will be either democratic and neutralist—or communist.

There is no other alternative. The few firm allies the West possesses in Asia are linked openly with the West for one of two reasons—because they are too weak to defend themselves or because membership of the Western camp bring economic advantages. As time passes the validity of these reasons must grow weaker. It is weakening now.

There are small neutral nations in Asia now—Burma and Ceylon for example. So far their neutrality has proved an adequate shield against communist attack. As time passes this conclusion must gain increasing force among Asian nations which do not wish in any circumstances to be involved in war.

Moreover, there is little evidence that the West is more generous with its economic aid to nations allied with it than to those who prefer neutrality. The Pakistanis, for instance, feel strongly about this and feel a little frustrated because, in their view, staunch membership of C.E.N.T.O. and S.E.A.T.O. has not brought commensurate rewards.

So to this extent Asia may well be lost to the western camp. From Karachi to Kobe, from Singapore to Srinigar every intelligent Asian feels that neutralism—an Nehruesque neutralism—is Asia's best bet in the great ideological struggle. For Asia has to live with China and its thinking is naturally coloured by the menace to their future presented not only by Chinese communism on the march but also by the millions of Chinese in their midst.

But is Asia necessarily lost to communism—the second half of the question, to my mind this is by far the more important half.

The conversion of Asia to neutralism need not be a victory for communism. Indeed, it could well be construed as a western triumph.

Even the Americans have at last abandoned the concept that he who is not for us is against us. At length the United States is coming to realise that a neutral India is infinitely preferable to a communist aligned one, and has a moderating influence that cannot be gainsaid. As I was told in India, "in Washington's eyes neutralism has become respectable."

But where the correspondents with their gloomy prognostications have, in my view, erred is in confusing two interlocked questions.

- Will Asia choose neutralism in the cold war?
- Will democracy or communism triumph in Asia?

Of the two the second is infinitely the more vital. In the current idiom "I couldn't care less" whether Asia goes neutral and on balance I believe this would be its wisest course. The second issue is the most important one confronting the whole world today. It is no exaggeration to say that freedom itself, in the global sense, hangs on the answer. If Asia's 1,800,000,000 people turn communist what hope of survival can democracy have in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Africa or the Americas?

The Indians know this and are a little exasperated that the West seems unwilling or unable to admit the obvious—that the fate of man in the next five centuries rests on the outcome of the ideological struggle now taking place between India and China.

In India 450,000,000 people are practising democracy and striving to build a great nation by free means. In China 600,000,000 are driving toward the goal of greatness by guided means. If India wins the race or even loses in a photo-finish, then democracy should have come to stay in Asia and should survive in the world. But if China wins by totalitarian means the lights of liberty will flicker and expire all over Asia and almost everywhere else.

This is the issue as I see it. This is the basic battle. I know Mr. Nehru feels strongly the need for a great deal more unquestioning moral support from the free world, believing as he does that he is fighting democracy's battle. And it is incontrovertible that the Indian experiment is the largest essay in democracy history has ever known. Remember too that the raw material in the crucible is largely illiterate.

Who will win the race? All other things being equal I gravely suspect that the odds favour China, not because of the superior ideology of the communists, but because of the genius of the Chinese people.

Set an equal number of Indians and Chinese at the same task and I know—no matter what their motivation—which group my money would be on.

The Chinese would win hands down. So the only real hope lies in intangibles—that the subjugation of the free spirit in China will bring the inevitable harvest of Dead Sea fruit, or that somewhere along the way the Chinese will take an ill-advised path.

There are some, Mr. Khrushchev included, who think they have already done so—on the matter of the communes.

If so it behoves the West to help India to make the most of the respite and establish a lead which the Chinese, with all their gifts, can never catch.

So the three cynical correspondents may well be right in their predictions of disaster. It is small consolation to know that they will probably be right for the wrong reasons.

JAPAN

"Japan Renounces War"

Tokio, May 27.

The man from Michigan cleared his throat. "Mr. Chairman," he said, "can I raise the matter of last year's riots just before the proposed visit of President Eisenhower? Millions of Americans were mystified by the violence of the riots and by the fact that at the election a few weeks later the same Government was returned to power, the security pact with the United States was signed and now a year later—you are treating us right royally."

The occasion was a Rotary one—a gathering of all the newspapermen at a conference attended by 22,000 Rotarians, 6500 of whom are from outside Japan.

The Japanese editor detailed to answer this was frank and to the point.

"You say it is a mystery to you; it is also a mystery to us. I was in the thick of things, knew every phase of the riots but even I do not profess to understand their cause perfectly.

"But what you must understand is that the younger generation of Japanese in particular is profoundly anti-war. Remember too that democracy is pretty recent here. Perhaps it came too soon, too suddenly. For one of the essentials of democracy is that people think politically as individual, not as mobs. Japanese do not yet think as individual on these matters.

"Last June Sohyo, the great left wing trade union federation, confused anti-militarism with anti-Americanism and were aided in this by the communists.

"That is why the riots were so violently anti-American. That is why the violence and emotion died so quickly. The Japanese were ashamed of themselves. Perhaps that is why my American friend is getting such a 'royal' welcome."

The key to this assessment, which is at least logical, is the strong feeling against war which I can vouch for, and is carried to surprising lengths. When the Government proposed to bring in legislation giving the police powers to deal with future riots, organisations all over the country, like the Y.M.C.A., and the churches and trade unions, protested vigorously. This, they said, could be the thin edge of a wedge of renewed militarism. It must not happen.

Only the right-wing Government party wants to revise very slightly Article 9 in the constitution renouncing war. All other parties, including the great trade unions are perfectly happy with the present wording.

The repugnance against rearmament takes the curious form of resentment and suspicion of all kinds of controls. It encourages the taxidrivers (who are fantastically good drivers) to ignore policemen's upraised hands, for the police are a survival of militarism. It activates the trade unions and Government in their refusal to take any sort of action against State school teachers openly teaching the gospel according to Marx. They excuse themselves by saying that the communist vote amounts to only one million out of 55,000,000 votes and in the case of the unions, that the communists in key positions are closely watched.

But the Japanese, so wise in so many fields, are astonishingly naive in politics. They are unimpressed by the historic examples of communist minorities seizing power.

And in the words of the Japanese editor I quoted earlier on: "They lack self-judgment."

Nor are they blind to the advantages of sheltering under the American umbrella. The manager of the vast Imperial Hotel, who has twice visited New Zealand and therefore treats me like an old friend, told me "Defeat was good for us. Only two per cent. of our expenditure goes on our defence forces. That's how we have recovered. Long may it stay that way."

ASIA

PEOPLE ARE THE BEST AID

Okinawa, June 2.

For the first time in six weeks touring I am on American soil—at Naha airport on Okinawa in the Ryukus—the American colony which the anti-colonialists appear to have forgotten. Every so often the Japanese inhabitants of this necklace of islands make a token plea for reunion with Japan but every Okinawan knows in his heart that the United States will never part with this strategic outpost of Asia until real peace comes to the world.

I don't want to be on Okinawa. There is nothing here for me in this tight security zone where even cameras are barred. My DC8 was scheduled to spend half an hour here en route to Manila but blew a tyre on landing. The halt grew to three hours. Having grown tired of the screaming of jet fighters which are constantly arriving and departing from the nearby air base, I have retired to a moderately sound-proof writing room to reflect on Asia.

Piecemeal I have dealt with some of the problems and trends I have found on my travels. For reasons which I would rather not explain some of the results of my researches must await my return; on other international problems I must see the whole canvas before judging the picture.

But there are other impressions that stay with me strongly. One is that there is emerging in Asia an international culture drawing heavily on Hollywood and the West. I do not know if this is good or bad. On the whole, however, I believe it to be inevitable.

When the night-club singer in Hongkong, in her dazzling cheongsam breaks into song she may sing in Chinese but as like as not the tune comes from "South Pacific" or "My Fair Lady."

All over Asia efforts are being made to preserve the local culture, but for the most part these things, like the Maori poi dances at Rotorua, are maintained solely for tourists.

Only in Japan do the old things have a strong hold on the people. I saw Gagaku dances in Tokio, formal dances by richly uniformed men accompanied by a primitive orchestra. These dances date from the 7th century and the dancers are descended from generations of royal Gagaku dancers. The troupe is maintained by the Imperial Court and gives only two performances a year—one to the Royal Household and one to 200 selected guests.

This show which I witnessed was unique in that it gave some 15,000 Japanese their first and only chance to see the royal troupe. I watched them during the performance and saw the rapt attention on their faces. From later conversation I gained the impression that this was a golden moment in their lives.

Later in the programme 100 Japanese "Ziegfeld" girls did a rice planting dance straight out of Broadway. This then was symbolic of the Japanese acceptance of changing times. The old and the new can live together.

My second impression is of overwhelming poverty (slowly being conquered) but except in India a poverty without hunger. In India of course the hunger, disease and the cruelty springing from them nauseate a sensitive Westerner. Millions of people are born, live and die on the streets, ferreting through trash cans for food, thousands of children are still maimed to make them more pathetic subjects for begging, the squalor, filth and degeneration are indescribable. Nowhere else was poverty so extreme, not even among Hongkong's crowded refugees.

Transportation is another of the indications of the changing face of Asia. Almost everywhere the man-drawn rickshaw has gone — except in Hongkong where its attraction to tourists is recognised. In some countries trishaws, or bicycle-rickshaws have taken their place. In Pakistan motor-scooters drag a kind of rickshaw; elsewhere jeeps have been converted into canopied cabs. But in Karachi camels still plod about the suburbs and donkeys still drag flat farmers' carts.

As one travels east from India one finds a fresh and heartening approach to landlordism—the first and greatest curse of the East. India has gone some way towards returning land to the tillers but has made little progress in teaching the peasants more efficient methods.

By contrast, efforts in Japan and Taiwan have not only returned the land to the peasant but have so educated him that production has been vastly increased and the threat of poverty removed.

I met a young Japanese who runs his family's dairy farm near Kobe. He milks 150 cows on town-milk supply. The cows are Jerseys, the pastures clover and Italian rye-grass and Alfa--Laval machines milk the cows. Need I say where he got his inspiration?

Other impressions of Asia are of the unfailing courtesy of the Asian, however, sorely tried by noisy and demanding Americans. Friendly they are and extremely approachable, provided there is no patronisation.

All over Asia I have found hotel servants the most delightful people, trustworthy and reliable and undemanding. On three

occasions I have had money returned to me because the tip was considered too high. (In Japan no tips are taken.)

In Bangkok where a team of five—two boys, three girls—looked after me with infectious enthusiasm, I summoned my team before leaving and put down a sum of money. Then I asked their views of what I should give them—leaving the division of the sum to them.

After a spirited discussion they returned a third of the sum but asked that I send them individual postcards from Tokio, which I duly did.

Few Asians I have met know a great deal about New Zealand, but few of them confuse New Zealand with Australia. I cannot say the same of Europeans in Asia.

In Tokio I gave a radio interview. The questions fired at me showed a deep knowledge of New Zealand and her history and geographical position. They even knew about Egmont—the New Zealand Fujiyama. Japanese regard New Zealand as "Japan upside down," as one taxi-driver told me.

There is a deep conviction there that New Zealand's destiny lies with Asia. Few Asians are unaware of our treatment of the Maoris, of our social welfare, of our high living standards. Most educated people are aware of our white New Zealand policy, but few feel strongly about it.

More significantly, I have been told in five different countries that the technical aid and educational facilities which New Zealand offers are more valuable to Asia than their American or British equivalents. In each case the man or woman who made this remark had visited New Zealand. Their reasoning was identical.

New Zealand has no vast sums to spend on expensive equipment. Nor has Asia. New Zealanders have to "make do" with something below the best and so have developed a high standard of improvisation. This, they all felt, meant that training in New Zealand was more practical than its American counterpart in many fields.

My most abiding impression is that the help which we must continue to give Asia must be as personal as possible. Small teams of technical assistants costing only a few thousands a year and working in the villages will win more friends and achieve more results than costly universities. Let us leave such lavish expenditure to the Americans and concentrate on sending our own people to Asia—a peace corps of artisans, mechanics and the like.

Our people have a gift of making friends, and most New Zealanders are jacks of all trades. They are the men and women which Asia wants.

Let me close with an example. Just after the war an American anthropologist called Stokes decided that the climate in a poor part of hilly northern India was suitable for growing apples.

He imported some hundred seedlings and began a nursery and for the next few years forced these on householders in neighbouring villages.

Today this area supplies most of India's apples. The average villager's income is about 30,000 rupees a year. And in this area the name America means Richard Stokes. Asia needs thousands of people like Stokes and New Zealand can supply many of them.

JAPAN THE INTANGIBLE

Okinawa, June 2.

In an earlier article I strove to impress on readers of The Daily News who have followed me so far on my travels that a vital and perhaps decisive ideological battle is now being waged between two nations, India and China, who between them contain more than a third of the world's people. The prize in this race is freedom itself, human dignity itself.

But in my concluding paragraph in that article I mentioned the free world's need to pray for a miracle which might divert the Chinese from a victory, which at this stage of the race seems probable.

One of these intangibles is Japan.

Where does Japan fit into this homeric struggle? Can 90,000,000 people no matter how gifted play a part on the sidelines?

At the moment Japan, as an industrial power, is miles ahead of either of them. Wages are two or three times as high in Japan as anywhere else in Asia; the level of productivity and quality of workmanship, agricultural production and ownership, and the democratic institutions are more highly organised and developed there than anywhere else. And Japan is already 99 per cent literate.

In these circumstances 90,000,000 Japanese can achieve a great deal in Asia no matter what the numerical odds may be. Remember that less than 50,000,000 Britons once policed and controlled the world; that none of the great conquerors and leaders of civilisation has been numerically strong.

If we accept that Japan on the sideline may be a decisive part in the battle for survival of democracy in Asia, then we must study with some deliberation the strengths and weaknesses of the Japanese people. I have no hesitation in saying that as a race they have more of the qualities required for success than the pot pourri of peoples who comprise Mr. Nehru's India.

Vis-a-vis the Chinese, the Japanese have certain weaknesses. They lack a critical judgment of their own actions, and seem incapable of political prescience. Against this they have many dynamic qualities which the Chinese lack. But most of all they are not divided in their aims. Their aim is peace, almost at any price, a peace which will give them the time and elbow room to become the great industrial power of Asia.

Of their own free will they are never likely to go communist, but could possibly be caught in a snare of their own weaving because they are striving to cling to American protection while resuming their traditional and inevitable trade with China. Any person who can produce a recipe under which the Japanese can get all the benefits of being neutral and of being an American protege would become a national hero overnight.

Because Japan is short of raw materials and needs ever increasing quantities to feed her hungry furnaces she is, as Britain has always been, extremely dependent on overseas trade.

Now she has instituted an important economic aid corporation of her own (on which Mr. Ichiguru, former Ambassador to New Zealand, is a key figure). Japan since the peace treaty, has been paying reparations to the countries she over-ran in the last big war. These reparations continue for another 10 years and have in recent years assumed the form of technical aid.

For instance, when rich supplies of pitch were found in Celebes, Indonesia, Japanese experts were sent to advise on exploiting the deposits, the cost being borne by Japan under the reparations agreement. Now Japan proposes voluntarily to extend this sort of aid. The new corporation will resemble the Colombo Plan in its working but will concentrate on helping under-developed countries to develop techniques, industries and the supply of raw materials—of which any surplus will presumably be bought by Japan.

The rapidly growing industries of Taiwan lean heavily on Japanese help. Japanese cars (eight a day so far) are being made in Taiwan under licence; up to 30 per cent of the parts used in many of Taiwan's factories come from Japan.

As for the Japanese themselves, they have one enormous advantage over both China and India. They are a nation which, apart from the few years under MacArthur, have never been under alien rule. They are passionately devoted to their own country, and work quite as hard and intelligently as the Chinese or Indians. Because the modernisation of Japan began 100 years ago they have a firmer understanding of mechanics and maintenance than other Asians and their high standard of education may take India and China another decade to equal.

Japanese democracy is still young and not very firmly placed, but on balance is at least as strongly placed as India's democracy. Where India has only the monolithic Congress Party, Japan has two pretty lively opposition parties and two extremely well organised and politically conscious trade union federations.

There is one other point. India and China are marching massively to their several goals by a series of four or five-year plans which now and then suffer setbacks through flood or drought. Industrially Japan is years ahead of either and as the wastefulness of labour in Japan decreases the Japanese lead is likely to grow.

All in all, therefore, while the two favourites fight for supremacy, Japan could steal the inside running—and a march on both of them.

But this will apply only while peace remains. If China gets strong enough to threaten her neighbours, when she has atomic weapons, for example, the climate about the Sea of Japan will change.

Meanwhile the advance of Japan is one of the most hopeful portents in the Asian sky. For, whether neutralist or pacifist, Japan stands for democracy and the free way of life—and is thus on the side of the angels.

SPECIAL TOPICS

SINGAPORE

Prison On A Tropic Isle

Singapore, May 1.

Have you ever eaten shark's fin soup or bird's nest soup, or curried chicken with sambals, or a Singhalese rice meal? Have you ever had your horoscope told by a shaven, saffron-robed Buddhist priest inside a 60-foot concrete Buddha? Have you ever bathed on a beach with tiger or leopard footprints on the sand besides you and gibbons "whoofing" in the jungle behind? Or watched saronged Malays playing badminton among the scraggy chickens in a kampong?

In a few short days I have done all these things, but my most fantastic experience was surely my visit to Pulau Senang, a lonely jungle-clad island of 224 acres situated 20 miles from Singapore. Let me tell you about it.

Singapore is sorely troubled by tongs, Chinese secret societies that grew out of the old friendly societies of China and have now borrowed the weapons of Chicago gangsterism in the 30's.

They resort to all manner of thuggery and to petty protection rackets involving the street hawkers. Only today a towkay or rich Chinese industrialist was shot dead because he refused to pay 50,000 dollars in ransom money—before being kidnapped.

The Government decided to change all this. They grabbed some 300 members of tongs and clamped them into Changi jail, a rough, tough old model jail intended to curb the worst of their exuberance. Then they packed them off to Pulau Senang.

In effect these 300 Chinese were landed on a stony beach and told: "Here is the material, the tools, the food. Get ahead and build yourself a detention centre."

Boss of this venture is Inspector Dutton, an expatriate Cockney from Walthamstow, with a Malay wife and the physique of an All Black lock. He is a man of many parts, a born pioneer and soldier of fortune with a fantastic war record. Wherever the fighting was thickest in Europe there was Dutton dropping behind the lines in Greece or Albania or briganding with the L.R.D.G. And when Europe ran short of assignments Dutton was dropped into the Malayan hills to discomfort the Japanese.

The inspector planned the whole lay-out at Pulau Senang, surveyed the island, scrounged everything he needed from the Public Works and chivvied and harried his 350 "pupils" to work as they had never done before. The jungle was cleared, roads made, buildings erected and the detainees housed while the warders still lived in lean-to's.

The working hours are dawn to dusk with a break every two hours for tea. The men do everything for themselves while learning trades; they clothe themselves, lay bricks, install plumbing and cesspits, sow and tend their own land and even tap the 70 rubber trees in the jungle. Characteristically the £4 worth of rubber obtained each day is not sold but made by the detainees into working shoes.

And out of these labours of Hercules, something sparked and then burst into flame in these young gangsters. They discovered how to work and a pride of achievement, something of the satisfaction of the pioneer. They are so proud of their camp that they constantly ask if their wives and families can come out and view their handiwork. Some even, as the time of release draws near, plead to be given a job on the island. Several are being considered as warders.

They serve no fixed term. They are kept on Pulau Senang until Inspector Dutton feels convinced that they will become useful workers. Then they are moved into the third stage of their rehabilitation. They join the works brigade in Singapore, working for the Government for their keep and 3s 6d a day. Such is the labour position in Singapore that poor men queue to join this brigade which offers nothing but back-breaking toil.

"But my chaps," says Inspector Dutton, "find the works brigade a piece of cake after Pulau Senang."

As a rehabilitation scheme it is working remarkably well. There have been no backsliders. But as a cure for the lawlessness of the age I doubt whether the New Zealand Government would consider it a suitable model for the detention centre it plans for New Zealand's own recalcitrant youth.

But then the Chinese are supreme realists. I cannot deny that I left Pulau Senang convinced that I had seen something remarkable in the social field which has profound and important lessons.

HONGKONG

TYPHOON WARNING!

Hongkong. May 19.

"Here is the latest news of typhoon Alice," said the cool impersonal female radio voice. "Typhoon Alice is now situated 45 miles south of Hongkong and is moving north at a rate of 10 knots. Winds of a rate of 75 knots have been recorded on the outskirts of typhoon Alice. If it continues on its present course typhoon Alice will pass over or near the colony this afternoon. At the moment winds in the colony average 30 to 40 knots, with gusts of 82 knots."

That was a dispiriting note to hear over one's breakfast omelette. All the great hotels and the airport and the shops are "Kowloon side"; all the embassies and sources of information on the "Hongkong side," barely half a mile away. The ferries were still running but the red flag was flying which meant a probable close down at any minute. I abandoned my omelette (which tasted Chinese anyway) and made all haste to the ferry buildings just as the blue flag, indicating that the ferries have stopped running, was hoisted. This is automatic when the winds reach force nine in the Beaufort scale. In a milling, hopeful crowd of Chinese I waited for some time hoping for an indication of events to come. I waited in vain.

Back at my hotel, on the ninth floor, I switched on my room radio and heard the 15-minute warnings of Alice's advance. In the storm-capped roadstead half a mile from my window some 30 to 40 big overseas vessels were facing north, into the gale. The harbour itself encircled by a breakwater was a sea of masts where fishing boats and sampans were crowding each other closely for protection. From my window, too, I looked down on most of the rooftops of Kowloon.

When the radio at 11 a.m. announced that the force had increased to hurricane strength I did not need to be told. On each rain-swept rooftop tarred-paper huts and other shanties are built to house caretakers or refugee families. Just below me a loose shutter was flapping madly like a flag. Every fresh gust lifted debris, boards and anything movable and tossed it high into the air.

An elaborate lath and floral shop display 30 feet high, which had collapsed overnight had disappeared by 11 a.m., torn into a thousand fragments.

On the rooftops there was feverish activity as families strove to batten down the hatches. A line of washing took off like a kite as the housewife's desperate fingers were reaching to save it.

By 11.30 a.m. the whistling wind had begun to rumble ominously and continuously, like a beast on the prowl.

On the 11th floor of this hotel the roof-top cafe is open to the elements on the leeward side. By noon the roof was leaking in three places. Below a lone cyclist in a raincoat moved north along a flat street at a brisk 30 m.p.h. without the effort of pedalling.

Beyond, in the shelter of one of the vast multi-storied apartment houses erected for refugees, the waters of a square open reservoir were whipped spasmodically to fury. But on the rooftops the gimcrack shanties, moored by an intricate network of guys, still held firm.

By noon the words "force 10" were on everybody's lips but no one, except the roof dwellers, seemed particularly concerned. Least of all the two European bar-flies, straight from Somerset Maugham, who continued drinking whisky with beer chasers entirely oblivious to the howling wind and the hurtling debris.

At 1 p.m. the radio announced two ships in distress 30 miles away, and the first of three harbour collisions, when ships dragged their anchors and collided with others. The first injury from flying debris was also reported.

It was then that an uneasy calm descended on the city. The wind died and the rooftop dwellers emerged to mop up their backyards. The humidity was now almost beyond bearing.

Flash news pin-pointed Alice at 25 miles away; gusts had been recorded at 92 miles an hour. The typhoon was now expected to cross the colony at 2 p.m. bringing with it a wind change. Immediately the great vessels in the harbour turned to face the east, and in the sudden calm I saw a ferry set out for the mainland.

Reports of damage were flooding in — 400 fishermen had sought shelter ashore, four junks were sinking, two more had overturned, drowning a woman. Trees and electric wires were down in Hongkong, in Kowloon.

But I waited for no more. The ferries were running and I had people to see across the water. I just made the last ferry to Hongkong and reached the New Zealand Trade Commissioner's office on the 15th floor of the highest building in Asia when Alice struck, not directly, but with a lash of her tail. And having struck she showed no inclination to move on. The rain pelted down almost horizontally, and the wind roared down the funnels of the streets. At five I finished my round of visits and set off for the ferry buildings.

The ferries were not running — would not be running for two hours at least. And the rain fell remorselessly. I went back into town and paid another fact-finding visit, being deposited at the

ferry building at 6.30 p.m. to join a throng of 1500 Chinese. I was still there at 9.15 p.m. in the steaming heat beneath the roofs of the ferry approaches.

In those hours the crowd grew to several thousands, patient, good-tempered Chinese who jeered each official announcement that the ferries were not running but would run sooner or later. The darkness fell and the rain scudded under the rooftops. The only happy people were the vendors of plastic raincoats at four dollars or 6/- a time.

Somehow I found myself with a Chinese woman and two small children on my hands. I bought them sweets and held the smaller one who was frightened by the wind. Minute by minute I grew damper. My four-dollar raincoat protected me from Alice's moisture but not from my own. Shirt and suit were soon wringing wet.

Finally the gates opened and the crowd went mad. Only memories of Rugby long ago told me to use my elbows. Somehow the four of us — three Chinese with only one English phrase: "Tank you," and I — squeezed through the gates to the damp security of the ferry.

I reached my hotel at 9.50 p.m. — 10 minutes before the rationed water supply is cut off for the night.

While the wind still howled I contemplated under an ice-cold shower the patience and friendliness and courtesy of the Chinese. No other people I know, except London's Cockneys, could have borne that four and a-half hour ordeal so well.

But don't ever tell me that the Chinese don't perspire. I have evidence to the contrary.

Tonight Alice has moved on. She is 90 miles away to the north-east and travelling fast. She has given me a day on which nightmares will be built, but I should be grateful to her. Everywhere I have been in Asia something special has been happening —as if I were a lightning conductor of events.

The by-election in Singapore, the emergency and assassination trial in Colombo, the completion of Pakistan's new constitution, the preliminaries to Laos in India, a visit of Lyndon Johnson to Thailand — and Alice in Hongkong. I hope Alice has left Formosa behind by Sunday afternoon when I am due to arrive there. Once is enough. More than enough. But I wouldn't have missed it for worlds.

INDIA

A Memorial To N.Z.

Delhi, May 14.

Every year for many years past New Zealand has been donating £1,000,000 or so to specific Asian projects under the Colombo Plan. In principle New Zealanders approve this policy without really appreciating what is being done. But New Zealand must keep up with the Joneses elsewhere in the West so the Colombo Plan, particularly as it applies to the training of young Asians in New Zealand, is generally approved.

But do New Zealanders know anything in detail of the work that has been done? Of the Delhi Milk Scheme, selling 17,000 gallons a day of chilled pasteurised milk to the citizens of that city; of the Zeal-Pak cement company which has done so well that it made a bonus share issue the other day; of the agricultural college in Malaya; the Bombay and Colombo milk schemes, or above all of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences at New Delhi?

This last is an achievement to set the pulses racing. This magnificent scheme was made possible initially only by what the institute's handbook described as the "munificent gift of £1,000,-000 by the Government of New Zealand." Later another £100,000 was made available by the Dominion.

This vast project involving a 650-bed hospital, an under-graduate medical college taking in 50 students a year, a school for training teachers for other medical colleges, post-graduate training for nurses and a wide field of research was begun only in 1956.

Two main units of this institute which will eventually, with living quarters, cover 150 acres, have already been opened. Mr. J. T. Watts opened the work proper and the Queen opened the pre-clinical and teaching blocks in January. The rest of the vast plan is scheduled for completion in the third five-year plan, due to start this year. All students, teachers and employees are to be domiciled on the campus and many such blocks have already been erected.

Today the first intake of the 250 students is within sight of graduation and nearly 100 post-graduates are engaged in the advanced study of 17 different disciplines.

Inevitably while the institute is growing there is a make-shift air about it. A nurses' home is being used as a hospital, other buildings have been given temporary functions. Now help is rolling in from other sources, the United States Government and the Rockefeller Foundation.

But New Zealand's pioneer part will never be forgotten. Certainly not by any of the staff, or by the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the princess who has seen the institute grow from an ambitious idea to its present dimensions and who remains the president of the institute.

The scope of the research work being done at the institute can be appreciated when I say that in less than five years the institute has published more than 230 books, articles and papers on the results of original researches into a score of subjects.

One field of research is into the functions of the limbic system, that portion of the brain which signals hunger or satiety. Highly original experiments were conducted on yogis, the Asian mystics, which showed that the source of their power is ability to control the limbic system. Five yogis were put into airtight boxes, and tests showed that they had conditioned their systems to do with only half the normal oxygen requirement. They could also lower the pulse beat to 30, sweat at will and control their blood pressure.

Other researches deal with the time taken for blood to circulate.

For these and other work there is a good deal of experimentation with animals so that the institute runs a small farm (or menagerie) for this purpose.

When next some spokesman rushes into print about the chronic waste in the Colombo Plan, remember the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and remember too with pride the part the New Zealand taxpayer played in bringing it into being.

THAILAND

A VISIT TO THE BARBER

Bangkok, May 16.

I feared for my writing arm this morning. In search of a badly needed haircut I adventured into Pap-pong Street to the Happy World Saloon to which I had been recommended by the New Zealand ambassador.

Unhappily he did not warn me of what was in store.

"Short back and sides," I said. "And not much off the top."

"Yas, sir," said the smiling Thai.

He walked round me critically surveying the area of operation, then muttered something which was meant to be English but which passed over my head. I smiled non-committally. It seemed the safest thing to do. It wasn't.

Suddenly he swooped and began to work his clippers with incredible speed and skill. Meanwhile a smiling maiden seized one hand and proceeded to give me a manicure.

The barber was finished first. He walked round me pursing his lips, then for no reason that I could see took off my shoes. I was powerless. The smiling maiden was busy with the cuticles on my left hand and my right was soaking in a bowl of pink goo. Then the barber smiled.

"Yairs?" he said inquiringly.

"Very good," I said, surveying myself in the mirror. "Very good indeed."

But "Yairs" meant "ears" and suddenly he was doing all sorts of devilish manoeuvres inside mine—twirling things with soap on, then other things with none. I closed my eyes and waited for Nirvana.

At length the torment was over, the girl began to put away her things when the flip of a lever propelled me upright over the shampoo basin.

I emerged shaken but still undaunted to be greeted by an aggravated case of common assault. The barber began to massage my chest. He seized one arm, oscillated it, massaged the muscles, twisted me into undignified positions, then repeated the dose with the other arm. Then one by one he pulled my freshly manicured fingers until they cracked.

By now all my resistance was overcome, so that I was unprepared to deal with the assault on my legs.

At this stage the chair, like its incumbent, had assumed a prone position, and in turn my legs and torso were twisted into positions seldom assumed by anyone but ballet dancers and the more advanced yogis.

At length it was all over. I feared for the bill, which proved to be no more than 25 bahts or ticals (6s 4d). My tip was less a reward for services rendered than a thanksgiving offering for a reprieve.

But I still haven't worked out why he took off my shoes.

The moral of this story is surely never smile at an Oriental barber.

ASIA

BRITAIN RIDES HIGH

Taipeh. May 22.

I have now left well behind the British sphere of influence in Asia. From this city Britain is held in no great regard because of the fact that she recognises the other China. New Zealand does not share this disfavour for New Zealand continues to recognise the Taipeh regime.

Throughout Asia I have made some surprising discoveries in regard to Asian attitudes to Britain. In an earlier article I mentioned the official P.A.P. view in Singapore that Britain's greatest contribution to Asia has been the inculcation of fair play and justice.

Elsewhere, particularly in India, I have had this view strongly reinforced. This was the more surprising to me because I have always found Indians extremely guarded in their words, with the habit of telling the interrogator what they believe he wants to hear.

In India today British prestige stands higher than ever before. There is little recognisable anti-British feeling, even on the individual level, and there are more Britons in India than ever before.

Leading Indians are, to my view, distinctly pro-British. How could they be otherwise in view of the fact that so many of their institutions were inherited from the British?

One famous Indian told me with a sigh after a ruthless analysis of the character and shortcomings of his own polyglot people: "Only in the last few years have we ruling Indians realised the magnitude of the British achievement in holding together this goulash of peoples and faiths smoothly, efficiently and without apparent effort."

A leading Sikh — anti-Nehru by conviction but for all that, completely detached — told me: "Don't give Nehru and the Congress, don't give the Indian people, the credit for any progress we have made in 14 years. We are what we are through the essential goodness of the English people."

Yet again a leading Indian lady, discussing the fumbling falseness and improvisations of American policy in Asia, said to me drily: "What a pity that the Anglo-Saxon alliance does not leave the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in British hands!"

In Pakistan, too, now become as far as the western section is concerned, an American economic colony, the same feeling lingers.

Ayub Khan and his junta of army officers derive their strength from the British army training. Top Pakistanis still feel that their country had a raw deal at partition time and believe that Earl Mountbatten — a revered figure in India — unduly favoured India. They feel too that membership of two western defence blocs, S.E.A.T.O. and C.E.N.T.O., has not yielded Pakistan the advantages they expected.

But they do not blame Britain for this. Indeed, even in their most emotional anti-colonial moods they cannot avoid citing cases of British foresightedness in the devolution of power in her colonies as examples of wisdom and experience. One gets the impression that they, like most Asians, respect America for her wealth and strength and resent Americans for their insularity and arrogance. It is inevitable therefore that the manifest weaknesses in the American era of dominance should be measured against the old British Raj — and found wanting.

In Burma, bedevilled by internal schisms and cowering under the shadow of mighty neighbours, the feeling towards Britain is of a different kind. Burmese are quietly but deeply grateful for British sympathy and help after the liberation when Burma quitted the Commonwealth and embarked on an ill-conceived nationalisation campaign. Here too Britain's name stands high — for honesty, integrity and the accumulated wisdom of three generations of power and glory.

In Thailand the emphasis is all-American. The charming Thais tend to blame Britain still for the Japanese invasion at the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942. They believe that Britain led them to believe that her forces in Singapore were a great deal stronger than events proved and that Thailand should have been informed of the real facts. Nor are the Thais, so close to the vortex of the cold war in Asia, greatly impressed by Britain's determination in S.E.A.T.O. discussions to prevent sabre rattling and seek a modus vivendi with communism.

Britain's policy in Asia today as outlined to me by Sir Denis Allen, the New Zealand-born Foreign Office expert on the area, is rather ambivalent. Britain has accepted the devolution of power in her few remaining territories. In this respect she is playing her cards as the needs of the hand demand. In the wider sphere she now conceives her role in Asia to be one of mediation and moderation. Not only does she strive to soften the excesses of American policy but she is endeavouring constantly in unpublicised ways to lessen the suspicions between Asian nations, which in some cases are very deep. For example, Thailand's relations with Malaya, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Burma are far from neighbourly.

Altogether, therefore, Britain's race in Asia is far from run, though the amount of red on the maps must continue to diminish. Perhaps the only criticism one could make of the British political

approach to Asian affairs is that it lacks publicity and perhaps a little forcefulness — though it is difficult to be a forceful peacemaker.

That is on the political side. On the military side I am far less sure that Britain is any more clear of her path than the Americans. The forces maintained in and about Malaya and at Hongkong are merely gestures. They are capable of dealing only with small local insurrections. They are too small to be effective and altogether too large to avoid criticism — either of imperialism or of an entire misconception of the type of war likely in Asia. They leave the impression either that in South-east Asia Britain (like the United States) is ready to defend the area to the last Thai or Malayan or that the western defence line is the Mekong River. And surely in this day and age "defence lines" drawn on the map are as out of date as the Maginot line.

Yet it was Pote Sarasin who told me: "We constantly hear that a war cannot be fought in Laos or in northern Thailand. Isn't the answer obvious? The Pathet Lao have been fighting a war there pretty succesfully. So could we (meaning the West) if we chose."

JAPAN

Of Shoes & Drains & Old Japan

Tokio, May 24.

At my hotel door I was made to doff my shoes, which with two dozen others, male and female, remained on the doorstep (uncleaned) next morning. I was given instead a pair of heel-less slip-on slippers, four sizes too small, which soon developed the habit of preceding me down the corridors, some yards ahead of me, leaving me in my stockinged feet.

My bedroom left me so utterly dazed that I have not yet fully recovered. A wide double bed two inches off the floor, consisting of a raised wooden platform, a quilt as mattress and a second quilt, enveloped with sheeting, as top covering. The small hard pillow came from some doll's pram or other.

Oh, yes, I have a radio (with inscriptions in Japanese which I cannot read) and a telephone and telephone book (printed in Japanese).

But the room contains no wardrobe and no ventilation.

I have hung my suits on a blind cord, and if ever the murky windows could be opened, which I seriously doubt, they would open on a noisome, dark canal some feet below, whose subtle effluvia pervades the whole building—closed windows and all.

When I do my hair I must kneel on a cushion thoughtfully provided for the purpose and crane to use a small mirror built into a tiny bureau that stands barely two feet from the floor.

Presumably on this cushion the Japanese make obeisance to their ancestors.

On my bed, neatly folded lies a kimono and belt which I am supposed to wear while in residence. It passes muster as a dressing gown on my tortuous way to the dark hole of Calcutta that passes for a bathroom.

Did I say that my room has neither bathroom nor hand basin?

In the corridor outside, set in a recess below a mirror, is a hand basin where one can shave in full view of the passers-by, if one is used to shaving without light.

The best bet is undoubtedly the bathroom, which is reached from a flight of steps on a gradient of one in one—a hazardous descent when clad in floor-length kimono and half in and half out of one's slippers.

Outside the bathroom is another handbasin with a naked light above it and two taps labelled C (presumably for cold). They both certainly ran cold this morning.

The bathroom is a tiled mausoleum containing (a) an aluminuim basin (b) a tiled floor (c) two large square tiled holes, like cesspits, let into the floor to a depth of about four feet (d) a shower jutting out from the wall and (e) a multiplicity of taps labelled C. There is of course nothing to hang your kimono on.

I gather that the theory is that having hung your clothes on one of the taps marked C, you soap yourself with the water from the basin and then rinse yourself in one of the cess-pools. Unfortunately I have not yet discovered how one fills the cess-pools, unless gallon by gallon using the basin.

This morning I compromised with a shave in cold water (which I loathe) and a cold shower which wasn't at all complicated as all the taps marked C ran very cold indeed.

This evening I tried again. All the C taps ran so boiling hot that I gave up. There wasn't even a Japanese maiden to scrub my back. I gave up the unequal struggle and used the handbasin outside.

Poignantly I recall Lin Yutang's recipe for a sybaritic existence—"an English cottage with American plumbing, a Japanese wife and a French mistress." Concerning the first and last ingredients I have an open mind, concerning the Japanese wife I have grave doubts.

Any woman willing to submit to the type of interior decoration I am experiencing can, for my money, stay married to a Japanese.

I heartily concur with the sentiment about American plumbing.

Which reminds me again that the smell of drainage seems stronger this evening. Thank heaven I am going out to dinner!

But here's the rub. Few of the Tokio streets have names or street lighting. Those that have names do not display them. Few taxi-drivers speak English.

Thus the only guides are well-known buildings—the Ginza Hotel or the Tokio Tower. Or maps. I've a bilingual map to the New Zealand Embassy in my pocket, but I'll lay six to four the taxi-driver gets lost.

JAPAN

SUKIYAKI (With Geisha)

Tokio, May 27.

The lights were low in the long low room with closely woven sisal carpeting. So were the tables—barely a foot from the ground. The low flat cushions and the stockinged feet of the diners, the subdued lights and conversation made this seem like a restaurant for ghosts.

Except for a smattering of foreigners like myself the hundred or so diners were all Japanese. Most of the women were in flowered kimonos with stiff, expensive looking obi or sashes. Some of the men wore the loose, wide-sleeved male kimono with the belt knotted round the hips. And most fanned themselves lazily while the meal was cooked before their eyes.

On each table stood a small gas cooker and a frying dish. When you placed your order a kimono'ed girl arrived with a tray bearing all the ingredients, a second brought hot "sake" in exquisite little cloisonne bottles (one bottle per person), a third laid the chop-sticks and stand for same, and a fourth arrived with a wicker basket bearing rolled hot towels for sponging the face and hands. With the saki came saucers of uncooked and shelled broad beans which one eats (like peanuts) while drinking.

I chose sukiyaki, a famous dish based on beef—long, paper-thin slices without fat. These are slowly fried in soy sauce while green and other vegetables are slowly added — bamboo shoots, celery tops, spring onions and other unidentifiable foliage. As the dish is cooked it is served in bowls—one for the sukiyaki, one for the rice—and the diner operates alternately from these with chop-sticks.

But before this delectable moment arrives, enter the geishas, two of them, with an older woman sitting like the diners on the floor and accompanying the graceful timeless dancing both on a stringed instrument like a zither and in a high-pitched and not unpleasant voice.

The geishas are not another name for the dance hostesses and other euphemistically named young ladies who frequent night clubs in the world's great cities.

They are highly respectable, highly trained ladies who specialise in polite entertainment. Their skins are so carefully tended that they are paler than the skins of many Europeans; their kimonos cost a small fortune; their hair is meticulously and elaborately dressed into huge coifs above their heads, and provides one reason why the Japanese used to affect wooden pillows placed under the neck. Such hours of loving coilffure could not be "mussed up" in any form of intimate contact.

When their dance is over the geishas invited the guests Japanese and Europeans, to join them in a few simple steps. The geishas led two long crocodiles in and out of the diners, their weaving supple finger movements imitated by their followers. The older Japanese and their wives smiled happily behind their fans. The dance over, each diner bowed deeply to his geisha leader.

"Arigato gozai masu," he said—if properly coached. ("Thank you very much.") "Arigato" is not enough since it means "Thanks all the same," implying a fruitless service.

And the geisha bowed even more deeply and answered: Oyasui koto desu." (You are welcome.)

Well, it all gave an appetite for the sukiyaki, which was delicious.

Afterwards, as one left the room in search of one's shoes, waitress after waitress murmured their "arigatos" and hoped she would have the pleasure of seeing you again.

The Japanese have the courtesies and little vanities of life polished until they shine. Artificial and symbolic they may be, but they have a ring of truth about them. Remembering the service normally provided in a New Zealand milk bar or restaurant, I felt the Japanese method has its merits.

ASIA

The Unquiet Americans

May 31.

When I eventually return to New Zealand my dreams for many weeks to come will certainly by disturbed by the voice of homo Americanus (and the female of the species) strident, querulous, always five decibels above the prevailing clamour, betraying a coarse and unconscious arrogance that makes the hackles rise. These are strong words but something of an understatement.

My peregrinations about Asia have marched in step with those of countless parties of middle-aged Americans, mostly female, clicking their cameras continuously without respect for the wishes of the subject, finding fault with the service, measuring the priceless relics of Asian culture against the town hall back home, walking the world as though they held a heavy mortgage on it on which they were preparing to foreclose.

They jump queues, tip with a lavish and insufferable paternalism and always talk of the most intimate things in voices that make conversation impossible for yards around.

This sweeping indictment should be offset by the assertion that like a good liqueur homo Americanus is best taken in very small portions.

I have met on my travels many fine Americans who are a credit to their country, its position and ideals but much of the magnificent work carried out by the United States all over the world is tarnished and sullied by the American on tour—en masse.

Indeed the American en masse is almost as bad publicity for the United States in Asia as Little Rock. And that is putting it very high indeed.

Where do the Americans stand in Asia? The answer is—not very high.

In view of their strength, wealth and philanthropy they must be tolerated, but I have seen muscles twitching in bland, inscrutable Asian faces at some of their outrageous gaffes.

Throughout Asia their policy is unreasonably suspect. They are believed to be pacific in intent, but the fear is general that their clumsiness could lead to war. They are respected for their ideals and their power, and kowtowed to because of their wealth.

Those Asians who make good American friends become very pro-American, and the United States is the educational Mecca of most Asians.

But there can be little doubt that every Asian country depending now on the United States for its economic and political security, wants to be quit of this tie with the greatest possible dispatch.

There is a good deal of sympathy for Castro in Cuba, the argument being that, whatever Castro has done in the way of seizing American property, the Americans have had their money's worth out of Cuba a thousandfold.

But perhaps the most serious charge against the Americans is that they want to make every place they invade a carbon copy of the United States.

They fail to realise, for example, that Japan in its march onward has borrowed from all over the world—the law system from Germany, parliament from Britain, local government from France. The number one influence on Japanese writers is not Hemingway but Sartre.

Americans here and there may make earnest endeavours to learn Asian languages and their more superficial social customs, but there is no concerted effort to get at close quarters with the Asian ethics and philosophies on which their thinking is based. Anyone striving to do so is automatically an egg-head.

The ring of the silver dollar echoes in everything the Americans do in Asia.

On the personal level the Americans I have met assume in advance that no one can ever learn more than 40 per cent. of what an Oriental is thinking, though he may guess another 20 per cent. On international policy, as one Japanese notable put it to me, the Americans "play it by ear."

There is a deeper respect, as between one ancient and tradition-loving people and another, for the British.

"At least they know where they're going," a trade union leader told me. "We Japanese can respect that."

It is easy, of course, to exaggerate the evidence of anti-Americanism one meets—to recount the incredulity in the eyes of the Thais as Lyndon Johnson leaped into a sampan to shake a bewildered housewife by the hand.

Asia is contemptuous of such back-slapping bonhomie .

There is nothing ostentatious about Asian wealth or power. Behind the rather supercilious tolerance of such political buffoonery lies the deep hope that Americans will grow up soon. For this is the lifebelt to which Asia must cling.

The growing apprehension of Red China's motives makes this clear. As I see it, a race against time has developed.

Can the Americans find the real path to understanding of Asia before the continent is engulfed by the other side—which knows with ruthless clarity precisely where it wants to go? The battle is not lost, but the current skirmishes are far from encouraging.

And where do we New Zealanders stand in the estimation of this crowded continent?

Pretty high, among those who know anything about us. But let us face it, Asia knows New Zealand doesn't matter, can never matter in the major context of world politics. We are liked as people, admired for our social experiments, our attitude to race and envied because of our living standard.

But when all is said and done the whole boiling of Kiwis could be crowded into the Ginza—one crowded central Tokio suburb.

We cut a pretty big figure for our size, but a very little figure in the absolute sense.

ASIA

The Women Of Asia

Tokio, May 29.

"The colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin." So sang Kipling. (East of Suez one doesn't seem to be able to get away from Kipling, any more than one can escape massive statues of Queen Victoria in lands where the Union Jack once fluttered bravely from a thousand mastheads). But perhaps it is significant that Kipling did not underline the basic similarity of the colonel's lady with Suzie Wong or the young ladies of Japan.

Since the last big war ended the United Nations and new idealistic governments have been working assiduously to improve the lot of women. Indeed the organisation has an agency devoted to nothing else. On the surface the drive has succeeded. In India, Japan and elsewhere women have the right to vote and generally, the will to exercise it.

In India a dozen years or so have flung to the top many outstanding women—Mrs. Pandit, Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Mr. Nehru's sister; the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a Sikh princess married to an anonymous Englishman who has been Mr. Gandhi's secretary and Mr. Nehru's Minister of Health; Mrs. Lakshmi Menon deputy Foreign Minister; Mrs. Indra Gandhi, Mr. Nehru's daughter. Since most of these ladies were born to the purple I should mention that I met several others in the top civil service bracket who will be heard of internationally soon.

It is fair to state that in India women have fewer barriers to overcome today than most women of Asia. Perhaps it is for this reason—knowing that emancipation is well nigh complete—that they cling almost universally to the sari and seldom appear in any other dress. Or perhaps it is because they realise that the sari is more suitable to their climate and more flattering to their charms.

In Pakistan, as in most Moslem lands, the emergence of the women has been slower. In the suburbs of Karachi farmers can still be seen driving their flat donkey carts to market with a bevy of black-veiled wives besides them. And in Pakistan as well as in India the lower-class women do much of the heavy and menial work. Indeed they still do this in Singapore and Japan.

I dined one night in a Moslem home and was introduced by my host to his four small sons, in order of age and then to

his wife. Though his three teen-age daughters waited at table and were unveiled I was never introduced to them. They did not count.

All over Asia I am told the Asian friends of Europeans seldom get invited to Asian homes. This is true in Japan and in Chinese lands. It is less true in India. Instead the Chinese or Japanese will repay hospitality at a restaurant, usually without their wives. When invited to bring his wife to a social gathering a Chinese or Japanese will be evasive. His wife is either not well or speaks so little English that it would be embarrassing to her.

Only the truly westernised Asians regularly invite foreigners to their homes. Some believe that in Japan this is due to the general smallness of the Japanese home, but the general view is that the reason is the attitude of the menfolk to their womenkind.

The sense that women are chattels still pervades the east.

But despite this the power of Asian women is considerable. Particularly in Japan, which possesses the best-mannered women I have met anywhere in the world. Here, too, women do not matter, in the social sense. Few Japanese women have yet achieved distinction in male fields. But when legislation was contemplated recently to give some measure of sex equality, one parliamentarian remarked drily: "This is a very good bill. It will give the men a chance."

For in Japan the hand that cooks the sukiyaki rules the roost. Millions of Japanese males hand over their whole weekly pay-cheques to their wives and receive back so many yen for beer and cigarettes, and even for their girl-friends.

In Burma, where the women are a great deal more energetic than the men and consequently do most of the work, the fair sex is extremely independent and exerts its power openly. In Burma women keep their maiden names after marriage.

Generally, however, Asian women are less direct in their exertion of power. The shy deference of the Japanese woman to the Japanese male, or indeed to any male, is an enchanting thing —but no more than a smoke-screen to hide the power that lies within 40,000,000 gay kimonos. The truth is that the greatest difference between Judy O'Grady and Ming Lee-chen is in this matter of relations with the other sex.

Asian women remain feminine without becoming feminist. They seem to say: "So long as I have the power who cares if the men have the glory?" And where the demand for equality has forced women in the west to denigrate the maleness of their men (to the point that many American males are positively hag-

ridden), the eastern women do their best to kow-tow to masculinity and to endeavour by flattery to increase it.

So the paterfamilias pattern, the clan pattern remains. The head of a family is still a man of some importance because his wife has worked assiduously to make him so.

Changes are inevitable and are even now taking place. The spread of education to the new generation means that millions of sons and daughters are better educated than their parents. In another generation this must bring a dramatic change in Asian family relationships.

But I wager it will be a long time before the Moslem husband puts his wife before his sons, before the Chinese middle-class merchant freely introduces his wife and womenfolk to foreigners, before the ladies of Japan whether in kimonos or in Paris modes, cease to make their enchanting bows and utter their shy, stereotyped and friendly greetings when meeting the other sex.

The battle of the sexes in Asia is not yet thoroughly joined. Indeed it may never be joined, for Asian women are wise in their generation. Even their most successful career women put femininity first.

As for the lady Thais, those friendly and exquisite creatures, I trust feminism never overtakes them. For any change in their attitude or status could be only for the worse.

Tonight I sat through two hours of Japanese music and dance. I saw Gagaku song and dance dating from the seventh century; I saw a parade of dazzling Japanese costumes down the ages. Kabuki and Noh plays, a Samurai sword dance, the famous wisteria dance—all in costumes as splendid as they were archaic. Then as a grand finale 100 scantily clad chorus-girls performed a high-kicking routine with a precision, snap and grace unexcelled on Broadway or in Hollywood. The old order changeth? Maybe, but the high kickers in the skimpy costumes were as Asian as the ladies in multi-coloured kimonos and lacquered hair who preceded them. The more Asia changes the more it remains the same.

ASIA

Miss Asia Goes Visiting

Hongkong, June 4.

This article is mainly for women for it deals in some detail with the dress worn by Miss or Mrs. Asia on those occasions when she decides to forget the creations of Paris, London and New York and be herself.

As there are 117 different races in the Philippines alone, and quite as many in India, in most of which the approved wear for women varies considerably, the article is by no means exhaustive. Nor have I any inside information of what is worn beneath the dazzling outer garments—though, studying the cheongsamed form of the girl waiting on me tonight, I suspect it's too little to worry about.

If you are a Chinese lady anxious to look your best—for a formal occasion or a heavy date—you undoubtedly choose your slinkiest cheongsam, perhaps in midnight blue shot with silver. The cheongsam is a form-fitting sleeveless gown extending an inch or two below the knees and split up each side to show a flash of thigh as you walk. Beneath is a lace-edged petticoat split in like manner. For that formal occasion your best cheongsam will have a four-inch collar, standing up stiffly. Uncomfortable? Well, yes, but how flattering when the years begin to catch up on you.

You will do your black hair high on your head, sleekly and smoothly, use a touch of mascara and undoubtedly look breathtaking.

If you are a Thai lady going somewhere special you will choose first of all the colour of the day—yellow for Tuesday, green for Wednesday and so on. Then you will put on a long voluminous skirt of a rich hue and texture. Your maid will then take the front hem of the skirt, pass it between your legs and tuck it beneath the waistband at the back. This gives a kind of baggy divided skirt effect which looks most startling over white stockings and white court shoes. Then you will don a richly brocaded short sleeved jacket and look really regal. And your nails will most likely be tinted to match the colour for the day.

Down at Manila the lady on a date borrows from old Spain. Her long shaped frock has loose sleeves caught at the wrist and the shoulders are built high on wires in the Elizabethan manner, so that they look like incipient wings. The material used will be richly figured and exotic. Finger nails will be pink or mauve and painted with intricate designs in silver, like Indian filigree work.

In Burma on formal occasions men and women alike wear ankle length skirts (longyi) of thickish heavily patterned material caught at the waist in an obvious knot. Sandals are worn on bare feet and many bangles on the bare arms. The woman's bodice (ainggyi) is simply cut but again deeply and intricately patterned.

In India, Ceylon and Pakistan when you go out to dine you will undoubtedly put on your best sari. You know, the handwoven silk one, the saffron one with the richly embroidered hem that set your husband back 400 rupees. Six yards long it is and you drape it carefully, gathering it in at the waist the second time round before draping the loose yard or so across your left shoulder.

If the weather turns cool or windy you make the loose end into a head scarf. Light glittering sandals on the feet of course, and a tight fitting short sleeved matching bodice which leaves an inch or two of midriff bare.

Rings on your fingers and dozens of bangles on your wrist. After all they're 12 for a rupee in the bazaar. And if you're a Brahmin there will be a red caste mark on the forehead above the nose. In this outfit you'll look delightful. Any woman, whatever her shape or appearance, does.

In old Japan, of course, the formal occasion demands a formal kimono. If you are married the foundation colour should be black but you can have as many fiery red and silver dragons as you please rampaging on it. Your foot-wide obi will probably be grey with pink or green figuring.

If you are single the basic colour will be white. You will don the kimono with the greatest care, slip an elastic girdle under the bust and another about the waist, then tie the obi in a bow in front, tucking the loose end in at the top. Then you wriggle the bow to the back and almost rick your neck seeing that it is straight.

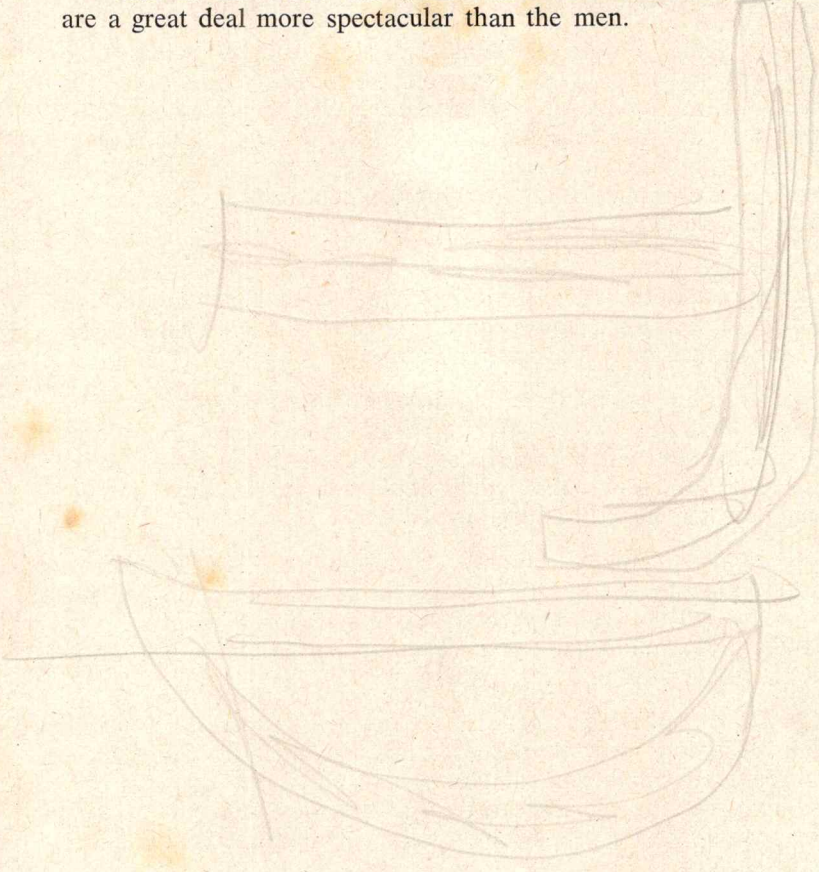
For a big date your hair may take three hours to do, in sleek unusual shapes piled high on the head. You will adopt a pale makeup, put on white socks and one-thonged sandals, the thong falling between the first and second toes. And you will carry a fan.

And what of the men? Very disappointing, I'm afraid. The Chinese male normally dresses like a Westerner. The Japanese may wear a kimono at home but on high occasions abroad is more likely to appear in morning or evening dress.

The Filipino wears over his dress trousers a dress shirt of the thinnest silk, hand-embroidered down the front and worn buttoned at the neck but without a tie.

In India you may be lucky enough to have a husband who wears the national garb affected by Mr. Nehru—jodhpurs, a matching jacket tightly buttoned at the neck and a Gandhi cap.

But on the whole the women at formal functions in Asia are a great deal more spectacular than the men.



SINGAPORE

N. Z. AIRMEN ABROAD

Singapore, June 10.

Changi Creek is a deep inlet in Singapore Island which provided smooth water for boating and acts as a delightful backdrop to Changi airport, a vast Royal Air Force establishment containing all its own services, shops and living quarters. One small corner of this is a New Zealand oasis—the home of No. 41 (Bristol Freighter) Squadron.

The New Zealanders are entirely self-contained. Painted, Maori lintel posts lead to squadron headquarters. A small notice pointing nowhere in particular reads "Hongi's Track." All the buildings are provided by the New Zealand Government, all are air-conditioned and kept in apple-pie order.

In this little enclave live 78 New Zealanders, part of the Bristol Freighter Squadron, of which the other half is in New Zealand.

They maintain and operate five freighters whose chief role is dropping supplies to troops and others in the jungle. One member of the squadron who received the A.F.C. in the Queen's Birthday honours has taken part in 150 such sorties. Often their duties take the airmen farther afield — to Hongkong, the United Kingdom, New Zealand.

The squadron has another important duty — rescue work. The crews are trained not only for air-sea rescue work but also for rescue work in heavy bush.

The Hastings aircraft that ply regularly between Whenuapai and Singapore have no connection with 41 Squadron but are serviced and linked with a British Hastings squadron on the same airport.

There was not much doing at No. 41 on Saturday morning so at 10.30 p.m. Air Comomdore T. F. Gill, C.B.E., D.S.O., and I boarded a freighter to fly across the island to Tangya, the airport which houses the famous 75 Squadron, flying Canberras.

Inside the freighter seemed as big as a concert chamber. It was entirely empty except for four puny seats set side by side and another set in the nose. None of these was for me. I was handed a set of overalls which I donned then climbed a ladder through a manhole into the pilot's compartment. There I crouched like an outsize gremlin behind the pilot and co-pilot on the short flight across the island.

Tangya airport is going to be very large indeed. Thousands of Chinese are at the moment extending the runway by a considerable amount. It is Changi all over again — an air force

island insulated from the civilian world. Here No. 75's flag flies before another Maori entrance and here Air Commodore Gill and I passed into the care of Squadron-Leader H. G. Moss (who was working for the New Plymouth Savings Bank in New Plymouth when he joined the air force).

This is a fully-operational squadron of eight Canberras, with one dual-machine as a trainer. No. 75 Squadron shares hangars and workshops with the R.A.F. No. 60 Squadron and both combine with an Australian squadron for exercises at least once a month.

Squadron-Leader Moss is extremely proud of his 180 Kiwis.

"They're as good a bunch of chaps as you'll find anywhere," he said. "This is Saturday but I guarantee you'll find several working in the hangar in off-time on jobs they couldn't get finished yesterday (we did). Many of them are the first products of the air force schools at home."

"We're almost entirely self-contained here but not quite," he went on. "We have to hire out some married quarters outside the camp. But married men are not brought over here with their families until the hiring is complete. Then they walk straight into a furnished house with the frig. stocked for several days and a servant awaiting instructions.

"Married men serve two years on this station and single men eighteen months."

The vast hangar was a hive of activity. In recent weeks two Canberras had made belly-landings necessitating a complete overhaul. Elsewhere men were fitting up a plastic fuel tank for replacing in a Canberra. Other men were rubbing down forward wing edges before spray-painting.

"You fly through two tropical rain-storms and you lose the paint off the wing edges," said the Squadron-leader. "And it's good paint too."

"One of this squadron's more interesting recent jobs was to distribute books and writing materials provided by New Zealand to Laotian villagers. They did it thoroughly, solemnly informing each villager: 'These are yours. No one must take them from you. They must be used only by you and your family'.

"This," said the Squadron-leader, "was to stop the head man or some smart Alec from talking them into giving up the stuff so that they could flog the lot.

"It was the ink that intrigued the Laotians most. They'd never seen ink in bottles. They have to make their own out of powders.

"As you can imagine our boys picked up an intimate knowledge of the geography of Laos on this excursion. When the balloon went up last year all the top 'I' blokes were coming out to Tangya to pump our men about the Laotian villages."

As we moved about the base, over the P.S.P. (the pierced steel plate which is laid on the bare ground to make a runway) and through the various buildings and departments I began to meet the occasional Taranaki man. Flight-Lieutenant Carter is the top engineer on the station and one of the more recent arrivals is Flying-Officer John Lay, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Lay of New Plymouth.

John Lay is quite an important figure on the station, which has a remarkable Rugby and athletics record. John's shooting prowess has preceded him and he is going to be kept pretty busy.

I had lunch in the mess with the officers of the squadron, Air-Commodore Gill and the station commander, Group Captain Moreton, also a New Zealander. In the foyer hung the battle honours of 60 and 75 squadrons. No. 75 was, of course a R.A.F. squadron manned by New Zealanders in the Second World War. After the war the squadron was transferred to the R.N.Z.A.F.. A squadron with a great tradition which will certainly be carried on by the very fine brand of officers and men now at Tangya.

Indeed, after visiting these two New Zealand "islands" at Singapore I could not help reflecting that much of the etxremely good name New Zealanders enjoy in Asia must be due to men such as these, men whom Asians meet constantly and who are often their only contact with New Zealand.

PERSONALITIES

SINGAPORE

M. J. SAVAGE WAS THE MODEL

Singapore, May 4.

Six crowded days in Singapore, that Clapham Junction of South-east Asia, have convinced me that the city which Raffles built is a microcosm of the problems of the area and could well become a testing place for the emergence of the socialist, semi-authoritarian version of democracy which is Asia's best political answer to communism.

Any city is nothing more than an apartment house for the citizens inhabiting it. And the island city is fortunate in its people, its leaders, whether in or out of power, its businessmen and towkays, its top civil servants and educators. Many of these I have met. Some have been highly impressive.

On the political side the People's Action Party is strongly reminiscent of the first New Zealand Labour Government which was swept into power in 1935. The parallel has not been lost on the party leaders. The secretary of Finance keeps copies of New Zealand budgets on hand for reference and inspiration for he believes that either New Zealand or Israel offers the nearest precedent to Singapore in the economic field. "We have the same zeal and revolutionary fervour as Mr. Savage's team," Mr. Lee Kuan Yew has said. "I only hope that we do half so well in our first term as they did in theirs."

(In parentheses I wonder whether Mr. Lee has seen the parallel between the case of another Mr. Lee—the rebel J. A. Lee in New Zealand—with the dissident Ong Eng Guan.)

Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is a shrewd English-educated intellectual in his early 30's. The great majority of his team are in the same age group. He is restless, deeply sincere and with some of the impetuousity of the young. But he is not above admitting error and for all his deep desire to carry Singapore to full freedom is a profound admirer of the British, though they detained him and many of his colleagues in Changi jail. He plays a round of golf every morning before breakfast and imposes an almost totalitarian control on the social engagements of his associates. Each of his ministers has three secretaries, a parliamentary one who is an M.P., a public servant one and a political one, chosen by the party as the Russians use commissars.

None of his opponents, except the demagogue Ong Eng Guan who won the Hong Lim by-election, doubts Lee's sincerity or his honesty, although charges have been laid of arrogance and of making P.A.P. membership a prerequisite for State employment. These charges appear to be partially sustained yet on balance the Lee Kuan Yew regime is as honest as any in Asia.

Although it holds 40 of the 51 seats in the Assembly, however, the P.A.P. is none too happy about the immediate future. Its policies are too moderate for its left-wing fringe, which is backed by the leftist trade unions, and there are bazaar rumours that as many as 11 members may cross the floor of the house and join forces with Ong Eng Guan. If so it seems likely that Lee Kuan Yew will dissolve the Assembly and hold a general election.

Perhaps the test will be another by-election next month in Anson, a part Indian, part Chinese sector of the city. The Opposition Socialist Party under Lim Yew Hock will certainly contest this, and Mr. David Marshall's Workers' Party may also fight it.

Marshall, a 53-year-old Jew with a new English wife, is the stormy petrel of the area. He was Chief Minister some five or six years ago but threw in his hand when the Colonial Office refused to agree with his rather strongly coloured plan for self-government. Mr. Marshall has a leonine shock of greying hair and enormous personality. His busy brain produces the most startling plans which make an instantaneous appeal but on later analysis prove to have fatal weaknesses.

He is, for example, most intransigent about the British bases on the island. "They've got to go, but Britain won't let them go. She'd rather suspend the constitution, and clamp anyone who objected too openly into Changi jail."

I demurred at this, and suggested that perhaps the British Colonial Office had lost a little of its iron hand in the past six years.

"I don't believe for a minute that Britain would do anything of the sort." (You can talk like that to David Marshall).

"I'm relieved to hear it," he said.

"What are you going to use for money when the bases go?" I asked. "They're worth 250,000,000 dollars a year and a livelihood for 160,000 people."

David Marshall waved such things aside. "There are other things than money. I have a plan for Singapore—to internationalise it."

"Like pre-war Danzig and Tangier?"

"Like nothing that ever was. That shambles in the U.N. this year during Khrushchev's visit is the key. I want to see Singapore become United Nations territory and the permanent U.N. headquarters. We have the facilities, the polyglot population, the services."

It is an appealing idea, with the usual flaw.

"Who's going to pay for the running of the United Nations in Singapore?" I asked.

"The members—as they do now."

"True, but the United States pays the lion's share. Will she continue to do so once the headquarters is moved outside the United States?"

Marshall's shrug betrayed his ancestry.

"That bridge can be crossed when we reach it," he said.

An extraordinary man of such vital personality that if he stands for Anson he will fly in, no matter what his ticket. But an uncomfortable man, too, because of his antagonisms and misconceptions.

A third key figure, Rajaratnam, the Minister of Culture, is less of an extrovert and deceptively soft spoken. A subtle man whose silences are sometimes more significant than his speech. A Tamil-speaking Indian with a great beak of a nose, he has a striking resemblance to Khrishna Menon.

We discussed, among other things, the fragmentary opposition to the P.A.P.—without rancour.

"They are individuals, not members of a dynamic party," was his view. Then he hinted that the P.A.P. is not particularly anxious to capture the last 11 seats held by opposing factions. Questioned on this he said rather vaguely that it would be uncomfortable to have only one party in the Assembly.

"Because of the resemblance to communist parties?"

He agreed but I felt there was something more and said so. I suggested that even now the P.A.P. is uneasy about its left wing and that a right-wing opposition is almost as necessary to the P.A.P. as power itself. He nodded:

"If those others go we may be identified with the right wing."

So Singapore's politics are complicated and heady stuff but extraordinarily interesting. Local politics aside, Singapore's leaders have an acute appreciation of New Zealand as a model of comparable population on which to found their Asian Utopia. They used the Parry report in setting up their university and are all thoroughly familiar with the New Zealand version of the Welfare State.

This goodwill is something New Zealand could well exploit much more thoroughly than we are doing now. Not by donating bricks and mortar but in providing human resources and by ceasing to run posts abroad and aid abroad on the cheap. In the long term such expenditure will be more rewarding than a comparable sum spent on frigates or army battalions. For it is vital to all the countries in and about Asia that this little cameo of democracy succeeds.

And make no mistake about it, though the model may now be Michael Savage's example, the system finally forged will be subtly Singaporean, a blend of the wisdom of three Asian races.

It will be socialist in form and authoritarian in emphasis. "Nehruesque" is the word coined by one of their spokesmen.

Early on I called Singapore the Clapham Junction of Southeast Asia. The thing to remember is that junctions serve both inward and outward traffic. That is why the Singaporean experiment in the development of a multi-racial democracy has real meaning in all countries under threat from communism.

Nor will the result be inimical to us. During a discussion on Asian philosophies and cultures with a number of top officials, ministers and editors, Malay, Tamil and Chinese, I threw in a provocative question.

"What you are saying, in effect, is that if you strip away the gadgets from the West, we have very little to offer."

I got an instant reaction.

"No, no," said Lee-Vei-chen, a University of Columbia graduate with a cosmopolitan background. "The British have given us a sense of justice and fair play, an appreciation of the rights of the individual."

There was a universal hum of approval and someone said:

"Without those things you can get only chaos and communism."

INDIA

GREAT LADY OF ASIA

New Delhi. May 13.

"Many a time in the old days when the British were here I used to come to this house with messages from Mr. Gandhi. This lovely house belonged to the military secretary then. Who would have thought that one day I should be living here?"

The gracious, grey-haired lady in the pale lavender sari looked about her anew, taking in the rich blue furnishings, the brocaded Indian cushions, the soft rugs and the picture of Gandhi himself, almost as if she still couldn't believe her eyes.

Yet Rajkumari Amrit Kaur is one of the great ladies of the new Asia. The Rajkumari is a title borne by the daughters of Rajahs. Before she became Minister of Health and in the words of her opponents the "best beggar in India" she was for many years secretary to Mahatma Gandhi. She lives now in retirement in a grace and favour home on the president's estate, and a stone's throw from the home of Mr. Nehru, her very great friend and colleague.

In her gentle, courteous voice she talked of the new India in a detached and penetrative way. Only when she spoke of communism did her eyes flash and her tones grow crisp.

"I cannot tolerate them. They are against all that Mr. Gandhi stood for. They believe in violence." Twice she has been to Russia, and twice played host to Khrushchev.

"It was odd," she said gently. "In 1953 Khrushchev kept telling us we were wrong to choose the free way of development. The Chinese way was best and quickest and most efficient, he said. Again and again he said it. Then in 1958 he came back again. Once he said of China 'They are trying things we tried and discarded 30 years ago.' But never once did he scold us for not following the Chinese pattern. Instead he kept probing and questioning. 'What does Chou think of us? Has your ambassador in Peking heard any official comments on the Russians? How can we get on better with the West?' "

"You think Khrushchev is growing apprehensive of China?"

"Of course, how could he be anything else?"

"And are you confident that the Indian way will triumph?"

She hesitated, as she framed her reply.

"It's vitally important that India does succeed," I said. "Not only to you. As I see it democracy is in the melting pot. If the Indian experiment succeeds, democracy is safe — everywhere in the world."

"You feel that?" she asked.

"I am convinced of it."

"I'm so glad. So do I. So does the Prime Minister. But we could be less than impartial."

"You haven't answered my question. Would you rather not?" I went on.

"I shall be happy to answer it. My people are not as clean or as hardworking or even as honest as they might be and the task ahead is frightening. All those people. Nearly 500,000,000. But I can see progress. The poor people are far better off. Servants' wages are higher and the new factories are providing more and more better paid jobs."

"Judging by the number of bicycles that is true."

"And of saris. But you wouldn't know about that. The poor women who owned two saris now own four, and buy milk in bottles, from the plant you New Zealanders helped build for us.

"But the lower middle class are no better off than they were. It worries me."

"Can you explain why this should be?"

"I blame the education system," she said. "All this obsession with academic degrees. All the young people being forced through college with an imperfect knowledge of both English and of their own language. Where will we find jobs for them?"

"And the artisans and tradesmen and maintenance men?" I asked.

"Ah, that is the point. At the All India Medical Institute, which is now my chief interest, I have asked for two American peace corps electricians to keep our equipment working. That is the weakness. Everyone wants to wear a white collar."

"More polytechnics and technical schools, more trade instructors?"

"Precisely, and from countries like yours which do not have million dollar repair shops. Countries which have to make do with what they can afford."

She spoke of career women like herself, of their need to remember that they are women first. "Mr. Gandhi always said that. In Russia 80 per cent. of the doctors are women because medicine is 'light industry' and they want the men for other things. It is wrong." She recalled visiting Mr. and Mrs. H. G. R. Mason in New Zealand and helping with the washing up. "Women should never lose touch with the kitchen."

Of the Indian Government she had something to say on the perennial question: "After Nehru, what?"

"We are still a one-party state, which is regrettable. Perhaps at the next election the rudiments of a working opposition will emerge. It is not good that so much should rest on the magnetism and genius of one man. And he's such a good man, through and through. Now he's growing old and does not wish to remain indispensable. We talk of it often. Such a good, great, humble man."

She talked too of Gandhi, gently, as though I was not there, that great ascetic who has reshaped Asia, and whose example and life are the driving force behind Mr. Nehru.

But most of all she talked about the All India Medical Institute which was made possible only by the help of two New Zealand Prime Ministers. She talked of the efficiency of New Zealand nurses whom she prefers to all others. "They have a different concept of nursing from the Americans." And again and again she returned to her visit to "your lovely New Zealand."

In two hours we covered a wide range — South Africa (discussed without rancour and even a little sympathy for Verwoerd's plight), turbulent Africa (with firm condemnation of violence), the growing power of the unions, and the cult of nationalisation.

"I am socialist," she said. "But must socialism mean nationalising everything? Cannot we strike some mean between unbridled private enterprise and regimentation?"

Then she came back once more to the flaws in the education system, the lack of trained artisans.

"I am so glad you have noticed that too. You are seeing the Prime Minister tomorrow. If you get a chance to mention it, please do so. He must be sick and tired of hearing it from me."

The idea of John Fullarton from New Plymouth telling Mr. Nehru what was wrong with his country made the imagination boggle, but the lady meant it. Power had not made her pompous or know-it-all. She was one human being. I was another. As she saw it, my views had as much validity as hers.

"Now tell me what's happening in Ceylon. The Prime Minister is under very great pressure to intercede, but of course he cannot. It is an internal matter. Is it true that Felix Dias Bandaranaike is practically a communist?"

A remarkable lady who has done more to raise my faith in India's destiny than anything or anyone I have seen since I arrived.

INDIA

India's Man Of Destiny

New Delhi. May 13.

The whole world is familiar with the appearance of Mr. Nehru, in his jodhpur white trousers, buttoned up long tunic and white Gandhi cap. At close quarters he is paler than most Indians are with a protruding lower lip, a ready and shy smile, and a flashing sense of humour. The hair beneath the Gandhi cap is sparse and snow-white but his handclasp is firm, his English natural, easy and beautifully enunciated and he carries his 71 years remarkably well.

Lunch with the Prime Minister was quite an occasion. Forty newspaper men, their garb varying from the formal to the startling informality of a coloured open shirt worn outside the trousers (by a silent Jap) were greeted individually by a handshake or in the case of the Indians by the national salute — both hands placed together at chin level in a praying attitude to the accompaniment of a slight bob or curtsy.

Then the drinks (non-alcoholic mango and fruit juice) and the Prime Minister and his daughter circulated, followed by cups of soup served by numerous impressively uniformed waiters. For this was in the Ashoka hotel, a tremendous pile of a place oozing luxury from every air-conditioning vent.

Lunch was a buffet affair. From a dazzling array of hot and cold foods one made one's choice and then repaired haphazardly to a table. I shared a table with an Indian representative of a Japan newspaper chain whose main concern seemed to be the food and the free cigars, several of which he pocketed; with Mr. Nehru's private secretary, a most impressive man and former Ambassador to Bonn and with the two top External Affairs officials whose ranking is too complicated to explain and who had taken me under their wing for my Delhi visit. The table was completed by a silent Jap (in bush shirt) who appeared to have very little English, and by the Prime Minister's daughter and first lady, Mrs. Indra Gandhi. Mrs. Gandhi (no relation to Mahatma) is the widow of a member of Parliament who died last year. She has two young children.

The informal conference that followed was off the record but the trend of the questioning was interesting. From every conceivable angle press men from all over the world pursued the inevitable theme: "After Nehru, what?"

Mr. Nehru was tolerant, completely detached even on personal matters, direct and good humoured. He parried suggestions that he should name a successor on the grounds that it would be improper for him to do so. When challenged that Gandhi in 1940 had named Nehru himself as the political leader the Prime Minister demolished the analogy by showing that it was no

analogy at all. He discussed frankly the monolithic structure of the Congress Party and just as frankly analysed rumoured splits in the edifice.

In general terms he surveyed the international position, discoursing in some detail on Laos. He has high hopes that Geneva will bring at least a partial solution.

When Geneva was introduced the Prime Minister gave a whimsical and gusty sigh, magnified by the microphone, that evoked a ripple of laughter.

There was much questioning on the commission for Laos which Mr. Nehru believed should be permanent. Asked if neutral Asia could not guarantee Laos's neutrality, over and above the commission, Mr. Nehru said strongly: "With an army? It would be ridiculous to do that. You can't guarantee a commission with an army."

He was equally in character when questioned on the proposed neutralist summit meeting. Such meetings could serve a useful purpose only if they were not too large and the approach was constructive. Meetings which resolved themselves into criticism of the actions of nations not represented at the talks were useless.

He declared that the assassination of Mr. Bandaranaike in Ceylon had shipwrecked plans for a second Bandung conference confined solely to economic matters.

Mr. Nehru discussed many other issues, some extremely personal, with a frankness and honesty that left a deep impression on me. Only the fact that he so far relaxed the off-the-record injunction as to say that the matters I have dealt with could be used in general terms have allowed me to use the material at all. The rest, he said firmly, must be regarded as background information.

No breach of faith is involved, however, in mentioning that he answered questions on relations with Pakistan, Kashmir, the Sikh separatist movement and on various Indian personalities mentioned as his likely successor. Nor did he boggle at questions on Press criticisms about the vast powers vested in him.

"For more than 40 years now," he said, "I have been a considerable figure on the Indian scene — by force of circumstances." Implicit in his words were the suggestion that he had not sought the limelight but that having achieved it he was bound to be criticised.

Then he said: "I am constantly astonished at the depth of friendly feeling towards me among the ordinary people, a feeling I have done nothing to earn."

When it was all over came another round of handshakes and salutes, a few words here and there and Mr. Nehru and his retinue, headed by his charming and competent daughter, moved on — to a tense and abortive 2½-hour discussion with the Sikh separatist leader, Fateh Singh.

It was a memorable luncheon.

"The P.M.," said one of his top officials to me, "was in a good and expansive mood today. You were lucky; that is the best Press conference he has held."

Even so, Mr. Nehru at close quarters left the ineradicable impression of being a man of destiny. Perhaps not until he has departed from the stage will India, Asia, the Commonwealth and the world realise the full depth of their joint debt to him. Nor could one escape the conviction that as the white Gandhi cap left the glittering room, the ghost of Mahatma Gandhi went with him. The white cap is not an affectation. It is a symbol of faith, the flag of non-violence forever fluttering at the mast-head.

LAOS

No Siesta In Laos

Bangkok. May 17.

This is a story of Laos, that unwilling little vortex of the cold war. It does not concern the Meos who live in the northern mountains side by side with the Black Thais and the Yaos. It does not concern the Kha mountain people, but the Laos themselves, the country cousins of the Thais who cultivate the valleys and Plain of Jars. (The whole list of tribal and place names comes straight from the Wizard of Oz).

But this is no fairy tale. It began a year or so back when the then New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Nash, agreed to pay for the upkeep of a small technical team to educate and uplift Lao villages, for the Laos are a people made indolent by their late masters, the French. The latter, believing in "donceur de vie" in tropical climes, taught the Laos to take an afternon siesta. Thereafter the Laos did less and less work, while their industrious neighbours, the Khas and the Meos, the Yaos and the Thais (Black, Red, Striped and Ordinary) worked the long day through. For the record there are all those varieties of Thais, so called because of the colour of skirt, divided in the centre, which they wear.

It was a small team which New Zealand agreed to finance — only four men, one from the Food and Agricultural Organisation, one from U.N.E.S.C.O., one from the I.L.O. and one from W.H.O. But it was an important one for the Laotian Government of the time was desperately anxious to get the village advice scheme moving and hoped to use New Zealand's example as a precedent for big Power interest.

No New Zealanders were chosen, but this team which was put in charge of a remarkable Spaniard called Ramirez. Senor Ramirez had been hunted by the Riffs in Morocco, and had adventured in other places. He is a born pioneer in the middle 40's, the sort of all-rounder which New Zealanders understand. He can turn his hand to a hundred and one jobs from repairing a jeep to sinking a well. He has too the gift of winning people's confidence whether the people be black, red or striped. And in addition he is the sort of man who can talk with authority to Governments and even to petty Government officials.

Senor Ramirez and his team began at a village nine miles from Vientiane. They assembled the villagers and told them of their plan to sink a well, which was badly needed, and to build a school which the village had been demanding for years.

The lazy Laos were overjoyed. They would be delighted to have Senor Ramirez and his men build them a school and sink them a well. They said so charmingly, for the Laos are always charming, and prepared for the afternon siesta.

But no, no, said Senor Ramirez, that was not the idea at all. The villagers must do both the building and the sinking. Senor Ramirez would be only too happy to provide advice and even a bag or two of cement for the well.

The villagers demurred. They knew nothing of well-sinking or school building. They'd never worked with concrete. Besides they were much too busy. The rice planting, you understand.

But Senor Ramirez persisted. He advised them on their crops, the W.H.O. man talked to them of sanitation, the I.L.O. man helped with the well and the U.N.E.S.C.O. man looked after the school. In a remarkably short space of time the new amenities were built and the Laos had begun to work again in the hot afternoons.

Then the Pathet Lao went on the warpath, civil war returned to the land of the Laos (and of all the other monosyllabic tribesmen) and the United Nations issued a directive to the Ramirez team and to all the other similar teams beginning similar enterprises to run for cover.

Senor Ramirez, however, stood his ground. He had not eluded the Riffs for nothing. Nor had he come to Laos to sit in idleness on the Thai side of the Mekong River. He had come to help the Laos, and that was what he intended to do, come war or peace or cease-fire. It was as simple as that.

Senor Ramirez found himself caught up in the battle of Vientiane last December and at the same time found a new use for his team's jeep. He carried scores of wounded civilians to safety at dire risk to his own life. Admittedly it was not much of a battle. The wild and inaccurate nature of the fire by both sides explains the fact that less than 20 soldiers were killed. It also explains why more than 150 civilians died and some hundreds were wounded.

The danger passed, the war moved on and now a brittle cease-fire rules in Laos. Throughout most of this time, apart from a brief visit to Bangkok to report, Senor Ramirez has been on the job directing other villagers to build drains and wells and schools in a manner that brooks no denial.

He is greatly helped, of course, by the fact that the Laos have not the faintest idea what the war and the argument are about. All they want is to be left in peace to sow and harvest their crops and, in areas beyond the Ramirez orbit, to take their afternoon siesta.

Senor Ramirez, late of Morocco and Spain, is the type of man Asia needs. If New Zealand, who should be proud to be sponsoring him, is really determined to start a peace corps for Asia, this is the type of man that is needed. It is a type that New Zealand produces readily and often. For New Zealanders know as much about grass roots as any nation on earth. And it is at the grass roots that Asia's real education must begin.

JAPAN

The Man From Pre - War Japan

Tokio. May 25.

In the halycon days before Pearl Harbour Admiral K. Nomura was a name to conjure with in Japanese politics. He it was who as Japanese Ambassador to the United States strove to reach an agreement with Franklin D. Roosevelt which would have kept Japan out of the Second World War.

The history books tell how the war lords in Tokio circumvented his efforts and struck at Pearl Harbour while Nomura's negotiations were still in progress.

Today the admiral is one of Japan's most revered elder statesmen. " 'A diehard' they call me," he said, his round, unlined old face crinkling suddenly with laughter. "But it is not I who have changed. I have remained steady in my views while those others in Japan grew more extreme."

He received me in his office in the House of Councillors (the upper house) where he operates as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Research Committee, the Gaiko Chosa Kai, which is the Government's policy-making body.

And while he played with a succession of cigarettes which he never seemed to get down to smoking he spoke freely and in a most detached way in a slurred English — the English of a foreigner who does more reading than speaking in the tongue.

We talked of Japan's attitude to China, to neutralism, and to the United States.

He is strongly convinced that economically and politically Japan's fate in the immediate future is tied to the United States.

There are strong forces in the country demanding a change. The extreme left-wing Socialist Party, to which the largest trade union confederation provides support, wants the breaking of ties with the United States to permit trade with and recognition of Red China.

It must be understood that there is a strong pull toward China in the hearts of most Japanese—a pull founded on the size and proximity of China and on a common cultural background.

The Democratic Socialists, the largest opposition party, want the best of both worlds. They realise Japan's military dependence on the United States and the fact that a third of the nation's trade is with the United States and favour some sort of deal which will satisfy China without displeasing the United States.

But, as the admiral says, the Chinese will have none of this, for trade is to them only another avenue of the political struggle.

Hence their dumping practices in Asia. China demands the breaking of ties with the United States and the abolition of American bases as a prerequisite to a trade deal.

With this Admiral Nomura's Liberal Party, controlling 396 of the 600 seats in the house, will not agree. They see no immediate solution, except a long-term one.

The admiral indeed is strongly critical of some aspects of the constitution foisted on to the Japanese by the occupying Americans. "Look at Tokio's people. They are free as air; too free. Our police are too lenient. Japanese need a little more discipline, for they are not yet ready as a race for this type of constitution."

The accent on freedom is such that teachers can and do teach Marxism in the schools, though in the United States, whence the model of the constitution came, this would not be tolerated.

But it is Article IX of the constitution to which the admiral most strongly objects. This is the article which begins with the sonorous article of faith—"Japan renounces war"—and proceeds to limit Japanese military, air and naval forces to an internal security force.

So long as this article remains in its present form, the Japanese will be helpless against any attack—without American help. Manifestly, Admiral Nomura would like the article altered, and his party needs another four seats (from small splinter groups) to attain the two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives which is necessary to amend the constitution.

To Australia and New Zealand there may be an ominous ring about this aim. Yet I believe it to be innocent in intent. Many Japanese resent being tied to America's military apron-strings, and seek adequate security forces only as a means of escaping American domination. Not that they want to jettison the American ties. On the contrary, they conceive the Anglo-American entente as the ideal form of partnership—a partnership of two strong powers.

Admiral Nomura freely admits that Japan's resurgence and rising standard of living (each year for the past six years the average wage has been rising by about 10s to 15s a week) have been made possible only by the fact that no large defence vote was necessary in the post-war years.

"Japan wants peace," says the admiral. "But to have peace she must have democracy and the power to defend herself. We made a grave error in 1939. We shan't make the same mistake twice."

The admiral so strongly recalls the diplomacy of the 1930's that I wonder how much he reflects the Government's thinking. After all, he was friendly with Earl Beatty and the great First World War commanders and visited New Zealand once as a naval lieutenant when Lord Jellicoe was Governor-General. And that is a very long time ago.

Moreover, the Japanese have the habit of putting a straw man in the shape of a national figure at the head of committees. It

is hard to imagine, however, that the chairman of the Gaiko Chosa Kai could be a straw man.

Be that as it may, Admiral Nomura could not fail to leave a most favourable impression on me. A genuine, mature old man with old-fashioned ideas which, though somewhat discredited today, are still as fundamental as they were in the days of Locarno and Versailles.

MALAYA

THE TUNKU AT HOME

Singapore, June 10.

Most fine Malay mornings punctually at 10 a.m. a finely dressed Malay gentleman picks up a brief-case labelled T.A.R. in outsize letters, puts up an umbrella to keep off the sun (or maybe the rain) and sets out on a short walk from his own impressive home, down two stately flights of steps between a couple of hard tennis courts, then leaves the chartered path and takes a short cut to his office. Usually he arrives in extremely pensive mood which encourages his press secretary to offer the opinion that many of Tunku Abdul Rahman's more portentous decisions are made on that brief and stately walk.

Not many of the world's prime ministers can walk to their offices without leaving their own estates. In the Tunku's case the Government offices were erected at his behest and at his doorstep. From the stoep of his spacious home set on one of Kuala Lumpur's many hillocks one looks down at an unbroken expanse of green coconut palms and trees beneath which some 60,000 invisible people live. The Tunku also has an office in his house beneath a second-floor rest-room or eyrie reached by a small circular staircase.

Do not imagine that the Tunku's duties began only at 10 a.m. The day I met him he had already met the Philippine Foreign Minister, Senor Serano, at 7.30 a.m., thus foregoing his usual round of golf.

That day the Tunku wore official Malay dress, light baggy grey trousers, sandals, and a grey jacket wide sleeved and ending in a high collar and about his hips, knotted loosely in front a grey figured skirt perhaps two feet in depth. On his head was the black fez-like cap of the Malay Moslems.

The Tunku (a title showing that Abdul Rahman is the son of a royal house) is a man who in the past few years has been commanding more and more attention on the world stage. It was he who put up two years ago the only moderate compromise with apartheid yet submitted by a non-European. He later imposed a trade boycott on South Africa, sent a Malay battalion to the Congo, and has proposed that the Congo be made a United Nations trusteeship. He is also credited, unjustifiably perhaps, with having been the main cause of Dr. Verwoerd quitting the Commonwealth.

Some months ago the Tunku, who stands head and shoulders above any of his countrymen in the political sense, decided that he should follow the current trend of the prime ministers' becoming his own External Affairs Minister.

I spent 70 minutes with the Tunku, so long in fact that I began to fear I would miss my aircraft back to Singapore. During that time freely, fully and without quibbling he answered the 14 questions I had put to him in advance. Now and then he went off the record, but generally he was happy to answer me frankly.

"You have your job to do; I have mine. If I can't answer you I'll say so." Later he said: "I have dwelt in detail on some of these matters because you are so far from home and will not have the opportunity to approach me again."

Many of the questions concerned the terms for a Singapore-Malaya merger. Hitherto apprehension of the addition of another 1,100,000 Chinese to the population of the federation had seemed an insuperable barrier to such a merger—the only solution in my view which could save Singapore from a lingering death. Then only a week or two ago the Tunku made an announcement that Malaya might be willing to incorporate Singapore on certain terms —if the three Borneo territories of Brunei, North Borneo and Sarawak were thrown in. This announcement was rapturously received in Singapore.

I asked the Tunku why he had changed his views.

"The merger must come before Singapore is fully free," he said. "Afterwards it may be too late. Who knows what Government will be controlling Singapore when freedom comes? The present men are all right but if their left wing takes over, freedom could mean an immediate deal with Red China and the establishment of Yugoslav and Russian agencies in Singapore, I couldn't have that. If that happens I'd have to close the causeway (connecting Singapore island to Malaya)"

I pointed out that Lee Kwan Yew also wants the merger before or together with independence.

"Yes," he said. "You will understand, of course, that I cannot speak very fully on this subject. Many other people are involved."

These include the 100 tribes and peoples of the Borneos who are not yet ready or have not yet been shown willing to share in the Tunku's "grand design," as he calls it.

The Tunku was generous in his thanks for New Zealand aid. "We understand each other, your people and mine."

(The previous day I had been present at the simple ratification ceremony of the New Zealand-Malaya trade pact which gives favoured nation treatment to the chief exports of the two countries.)

Within his own country the Tunku is conscious of the long task ahead of him to "repair the result of Britain's divide and rule policies," as he puts it. He is acutely apprehensive about Malaya's Chinese minority, many of whom are resisting his plans for Malayanisation. And he obviously distrusts profoundly the half million or so Indians whom he accuses of trying to set Chinese against Malays.

Because of the backwardness of many Malays (or the comparative forwardness of the Chinese) special inducements and protection exist for the Malays. Indeed within his own domain the Tunku practices a form of racial discrimination to which Dr. Verwoerd rather acidly drew attention in London.

"Ours is a free country," said the Tunku, "and we shall keep it so as long as we can."

It is also a feudal democracy in which the Tunku has usurped the role of the feudal king. He is forced to take a great deal on his shoulders and though still enjoying a substantial parliamentary majority is encountering increasing opposition to his Malayanisation plans.

However, the Tunku is strongly placed. The constitution is a most remarkable one, safeguarding the Malays in every possible way. Four million Chinese may run Malaya's business but the 5,000,000 Malays provide virtually all the police and army, and the Malays own the land. It seems that the Tunku, trying to protect his people until they win enough education to compete with the Chinese, has the sinews of power in his hands.

In wider fields the Tunku has launched an ambitious project for the formation of a co-operative bloc of South-east Asian States with the object of exchanging techniques, providing mutual assistance and smoothing out suspicions. This project which is already being called A.S.A.S. (Association of South Asian States) has much to commend it but may be shipwrecked on the very suspicions which it is designed to remove.

As for mutual assistance the Asian prefers to be told how to do things, new things, by a European. To be instructed by another man with a brown face implies a loss of prestige.

Tunku Abdul Rahman is a considerable figure on the Asian stage. I doubt, however, whether he can be called a vital or key figure. He is on the other hand precisely the leader that Malaya needs.

He has moreover a distinct fondness for New Zealand. After all it was on the nine-hole course at the Chateau Tongariro that the Tunku played his first golf for 26 years, and became so enthusiastic that immediately on his return to Malaya he joined a golf club.

And in Malaya today, indeed in much of Asia, golf has become the done thing. The surest way to make friends and influence the right sort of people is to play golf well enough to lose narrowly to your immediate superior in office.

SINGAPORE

INTERVIEW AT EDEN HALL

En Route to Darwin, June 11.

On my first contact with Asia, at Singapore some two months ago I rounded off a week of high-pressure engagements and listening to a few of the conflicting voices of Asia by spending a rewarding and informative afternoon with Sir Dennis Allen, who is now helping urge Britain's case at the Laos conference at Geneva.

Sir Dennis, who is a Foreign Office man, is normally chief of staff to the Earl of Selkirk, who is the boss Briton in South-east Asia. Sir Dennis, New Zealand-born and educated, has a gift for simplification and his hints and explanations helped me enormously on my tour. Then, on my return to Singapore a few days ago, I went to see the Earl of Selkirk himself, the man who wears "two hats."

The Earl of Selkirk is a younger brother to the Duke of Hamilton, head of a famous Scottish family. He has been a minister in the British Cabinet and has sat for years in the House of Lords. His dual role is virtual governor of Singapore and Commissioner-General for South-east Asia. In the latter capacity he returned the day before I met him from a visit to the three Borneo protectorates, doubtless to check on the spot reactions to Tunku Abdul Rahman's plan to absorb them.

The Earl of Selkirk received me in a gigantic office plenteously supplied with wall maps. He was wearing a very undress pair of grey shorts, a floral shirt and tennis shoes with an air that only an Englishman could achieve in such garb.

"Sorry I was in Borneo," he said—staccato. "Should have asked you to lunch. Next time. . . . Where the devil is New Plymouth?"

I told him and he bounded to his feet and checked the information on a wall map.

"Of course. Should have known that. New Zealand, Japan and Korea are the only countries in my area I don't know much about. Hope to get down to New Zealand in October—if Allen gets back from Geneva in time. Tell me about Formosa where they won't let me go."

This was a different sort of interview. Here I was questioned as well as questioner. The people I had met and the views they had expressed were obviously of interest to him. And he was constantly throwing unusual remarks into the conversation.

"I can't distinguish between left-wing and right-wing socialists any more. But I can distinguish between responsible and irresponsible politicians. I can do business with a responsible man, even if he's a communist."

Or he would throw in, completely out of context, a question reversing the trend of the discussion.

"Do you fellows in New Zealand tend to string along with Australia on Asian matters?"

I said I felt we pursued our own line, that there were sound "little brother" reasons for not following big brother's line.

"Good," he said, "Sometimes I think the Australians tend to support the more woolly-headed schemes of the Americans."

"Democracy?" he said a little later. "I wouldn't go to the stake for democracy. What it achieves is the common man's consent for government. But it doesn't breed wisdom. A show of hands never does.

"Still, it's all we've got at the moment to pit against the communists. Mind you, there's precious little communism left in Russia and China. What that Yugoslav chap, Dylas, wrote in his book was true. Communism in practice has become a struggle for power among the few at the top."

On Laos: "Of course we could defend Laos. We could let loose the American Marines to shoot anything in sight. But what would we have when it was all over? A different kind of trouble spot. Much better to swim with the current—follow the trend of the moment. In this part of the world the trend of the moment is neutralist."

On South Vietnam: "Diem is strong and capable. The last election was reasonably straight and he seems to enjoy the overwhelming support of the people. The communist guerrilla activities could be exaggerated. It doesn't require more than a handful of men to create the illusion of a vast underground army."

I left him supervising the preparations for a vast staff picnic on the lovely lawns at Eden Hall, a new kind of British diplomat, doomed and dedicated to graceful surrender at the most appropriate moment. But despite this the manner, the wisdom and understanding sprang not from the Earl himself but from 500 years and 16 generations of diplomats and administrators.

TRADE PROSPECTS

ASIA

N.Z. MUST GET OUT & SELL

Karachi, May 6.

Within my first week in Asia I have come to certain conclusions about the possibilities of expanding New Zealand's trade with this area where a great deal of goodwill exists for New Zealand among those Asians who have heard of the Dominion.

That the possibilities are enormous is undeniable. All over Asia at any given hour of the day millions upon millions of people are measuring two teaspoons of condensed milk into cups or glasses, and adding sugar and instant coffee. In the whole of Asia it is no exaggeration to say that this rite occurs 1,000,000,000 times a day.

I do not know how many tins of condensed milk can be filled by 2,000,000,000 teaspoons but I do know that it is high time that New Zealand grabbed a larger slice of this market, which is at present monopolised by the Dutch, Americans and Australians.

Both in Singapore, Malaya and Ceylon the initial steps have been taken to carve a bridgehead for putting New Zealand milk products on the market. The Singapore project is still in the exploratory stage and is faced by chronic difficulties. There the largely illiterate users of milk products buy according to brand. For years they have bought a Dutch product bearing the picture of a milkmaid. The picture sells the product.

When the Dutch firm modernised its label, sales fell away so alarmingly that it reverted hastily to the old label.

This is true too in Ceylon where an American cheese in a blue tin is asked for by name. Thus any attempt to thrust a New Zealand product on the market must be accompanied by an expensive and sustained advertising campaign designed to project the symbol of the new product—whether a cow or a kiwi—on to the mass mind. This is another field where New Zealand cannot afford to do things on the cheap.

In Singapore the plan is to make powders into milk. Here again the problem is to "sell" the idea of such milk to people who are used to buying milk in tins. When the Singapore Government a year or two ago introduced a milk-in-schools scheme it was far from successful.

The Ceylon project is of a different type. In Colombo New Zealand has already financed a pasteurisation plant under the Colombo Plan. Now a joint condensed milk project has been agreed upon. Mr. McHerzey, a burly burgher, whose name betrays his Irish ancestry and who is president of the Ceylon Milk Board, is awaiting with some impatience the arrival of the plans for the plant from the New Zealand Dairy Board.

"This is going to cost a lakh and a half of rupees and I have to have it finished by October, but I have no plans," he told me.

When completed the plant will process a quantity of milk far in excess of the locally produced quantity available. The arrangement is that New Zealand powders will enable the plant to work to capacity. This allows for quantity variation as the Ceylonese industry increases its output.

It will give New Zealand a firm foothold on the market. In this field there will be little fear of more popular brands since the milk board is Government-controlled and the new product will be given priority, and monopolistic privileges. The selective system of import licensing practised in Ceylon should ensure the success of the New Zealand product.

There are markets for other things in Ceylon, including tallow (though not at the present inflated price) and above all for packaged mutton free from fat, done up in one pound or two pound packs. I have seen notices advertising New Zealand "curry mutton" and have tasted it both in Ceylon and at Singapore. I am assured that a considerable market exists if a regular shipping service can be provided.

But such meat must be killed in a manner to satisfy the religious scruples of the inhabitants. Australia produces "Mohammedan killed" meat, having sought the local experts to ensure that the correct ritual is carried out. New Zealand must do the same to make any real impact on this market.

As for the shipping bottleneck, only two ships from New Zealand have reached Colombo this year with cargoes for Ceylon. Another is due in a fortnight with a large quantity of butter. But business cannot be done this way. Asia has inadequate cold storage facilities so that a regular stream of supplies, at least a vessel a month, is a prime necessity to trade expansion. Since Colombo is on the main route to Britain via Suez this should not be difficult to arrange.

Indeed I am convinced that if regular shipping is available there is a strong case for opening a trade commissioner's office at Colombo. Despite the political insecurity there, the chances of the door being closed on New Zealand foodstuffs seems remote.

It is well to remember, however, that establishing a trade post is the beginning, not the end of a drive for markets. Trade commissioners are not salesmen. Their role is to study the possibilities of sales and advise the New Zealand Government where fruitful fields exist. Thereafter the task is in the hands of the manufacturers and producer boards. In some circumstances trade commissioners act in reverse. They cannot sell New Zealand goods but provide local exporters with an easy way to find a market in New Zealand.

However well the New Zealand Dairy Board may be doing in Asia it is still some steps behind the Australians, who with higher costs and generally inferior products have considerable sales of dairy products.

This New Zealand unbalance can be cured only by the guarantee of regular supplies and by sustained advertising on a grand scale. Above all more "intelligence agents" must visit the area to find out local tastes in flavour, colour, size and packaging of products. This will not be achieved by studying trade reports but only by painstaking inquiries from Asian importers and retailers concerning their preferences. Moreover it seems certain that the actual selling of goods must be done by Asian firms in good standing.

Even the sale of foodstuffs cannot be wholly divorced from politics in this area. The appointment of local agents, or better still, partnership with local firms also lessens the chance of local pressure groups enforcing a ban on New Zealand products to protect themselves.

As far as I have travelled, the New Zealand marketing commission's leaders seem aware of this important fact. I am not so sure however, that their ideas on advertising are built on a sufficiently large scale, nor what approach they have made, if any, to the New Zealand conference lines to ensure regular shipping services.

HONGKONG

A VISION OF MILK

Hongkong, May 20.

The Chinese millionaire thrust a nightcap in front of me and said: "I am a rich man, Mr. Fullarton. An income of a million dollars—tax free. Is that a rich man? Fair enough?"

"Fair enough," I said, hoping I kept the envy out of my voice.

Mr. X was not boasting. He controls or has substantial shares in most great Hongkong concerns and has colossal holdings abroad. It is a matter of "face" with him that all his enterprises succeed.

We were sitting in a plush private room of a great hotel after a fabulous 11-course Chinese dinner and an equally remarkable purely Chinese floor show.

"But from this business," he went on, "I do not want to make big money. I want to help my people. Fair enough?"

"This business," was the Dairy Board plan to reconstitute milk in a Hongkong plant, built by the board, supplied by the board, directed by the board — but with the end-product being marketed by Mr. X. It could be the bridgehead for a substantial New Zealand invasion of Asian markets. The land has been bought, the building planned and with luck the plant will be operating this year — supplying 3,000,000 Chinese with a quality product they now lack. All over Asia where milk is appreciated whispers of this deal have percolated, to Singapore, Burma, Ceylon, India. All see in it a new formula, a new approach. So does Mr. X.

"I told your people they can't afford to let this go, or somebody will get in. Maybe the Australians or the Danes who are already in Thailand. I told them I want no money, just milk for my people. My people, Mr. Fullarton."

He waved an expansive hand to the vast bulk of China to the west of us.

"They live there too. Six hundred million of them.

"I'm not a Communist, Mr. Fullarton, you understand. I'm Chinese. But those people are my people. They need milk. Your dairy board has sold some skim milk powder to China. The Canadians are selling them wheat. Fair enough?"

I told him I couldn't agree more.

"This scheme of ours will put New Zealand on the map. It will not be lost on China — my people. That is what I want, you see, Hongkong first; China after. Fair enough?"

"Fair enough," I echoed.

Nor did I need Mr. X's earnest enthusiasm to convince me that at long last New Zealand products are making an impression on Asia. The Hongkong scheme could be a pilot scheme.

But I am convinced too there is no room for casual markets —irregular token shipments of newsprint or Kraft paper or milk powder. Shipments, whatever their size, must be regular. The complete co-operation of the shipping companies will be required.

Nor are all Asian countries attractive as New Zealand markets at present. Thailand has a meat surplus and is a Danish empire for condensed milk. Singapore is wedded to condensed milk, a Dutch variety. Pakistan is doing very nicely on American surpluses. India, though anxious to import, has balance of payment difficulties.

But there are other lands which present attractive prospects —Malaya and the Philippines, already a great customer of New Zealand and likely to be the testing ground of a new hush-hush export experience, Hongkong, Ceylon and Japan.

"And my people in China," as Mr. X would add, "Fair enough?"

Well, why not?

But somebody must get out and sell, spectacularly, with a visual advertising programme that cannot be done on the cheap. There we are back with those few words that are written as a slur across many of the Dominion's overseas activities, whether diplomatic or economic. "Done on the cheap."

I trust the words are not written again across the exciting dairy produce negotiations now under way!

ASIA

ASIAN DAIRY MARKET

Tokio, June 1.

As I write millions of Japanese boys in brass-buttoned blue suits and millions of girls in shapeless sailor suits are hurrying off to school with the prospect of milk and sandwiches for lunch. They are the living symbols of a revolutionary change in Asia's eating habits which must enable New Zealand to reap a golden harvest—if we have the skill, the vision and the salesmanship that the occasion demands.

For milk and sandwiches mean dairy produce (butter and milk) and meat (preferably mutton). A considerable portion of Japan's population is thus forsaking one rice meal a day and endeavouring to build up on proteins.

For Asia as a continent has discovered that proteins build bigger and healthier people.

American surplus products created the initial taste for Western foods. Now the taste is established and growing fast, and American surplusses can no longer satisfy it.

Similar stories can be told of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, of the Philippines, Malaya, Hongkong and Singapore. Government after government is launching campaigns to provide milk in schools and to improve people's diets.

What is New Zealand doing to meet this challenge? Trade commissioners are working hard and intelligently in Japan, Singapore, Malaya and elsewhere. The New Zealand Dairy Board has established substantial bridgeheads in half a dozen countries.

More than 20,000 tons of ewe mutton were sold in Japan last year and more will be sold this year if the New Zealand meat companies can supply it.

Before I left New Zealand I sensed the exhilaration of Dairy Board officials at the exciting prospects ahead.

But now is the time to sound a warning note. The drive for Asian markets could fail unless New Zealand exporters firmly grasp the following essentials:—

- The products must arrive when ordered and with great regularity for Asia is short of cold storage space.
- They must be prepared to the customers' needs, as to taste and quality.
- They must be packaged as he wants them in the sizes he wants.

Simple enough? But all along the line New Zealand is falling down on these things. Selling on a buyer's market is a new experience for the New Zealand exporter.

He has yet to grasp that the customer is always right.

While New Zealand strives to prove to Asians the superiority of the New Zealand approach, other more wide-awake nations

may climb on the band-waggon. As the Australians, the Dutch and even the Danes are doing in various parts of Asia.

Let me quote examples. A year or two ago there were small sales of New Zealand newsprint and Kraft paper in Asia. They made a good impression, but when repeat orders were sought the answer was "no."

The newsprint had to go to Australia; the Kraft was needed locally.

No firm or country can do business like this. If token shipments are once made they must be available on demand as a brideghead to a later increase.

No buyer is interesetd in a product which may be available only when New Zealand has supplied all its other regular markets.

On the score of regularity of delivery New Zealand interests are in the hands of the conference lines.

If these cannot supply regular shipping services, preferably on a monthly basis, the Japanese will very soon do so, provided there is a guarantee of trade.

Nor must New Zealanders believe that any old thing or quality will do. Japan's food requirements are as exacting hygienically as those of the United States. A year or two ago a New Zealand woollen mill made a large sale of men's knee length woollen stockings to an American firm. They sold like wild fire at an extraordinary price. A repeat order was made. The manufacturer sent "seconds."

That sort of thing is all too common. New Zealand manufacturers other than those who deal in primary products are not really interested in exporting.

Trade commissioners send back voluminous reports on openings for this product or that, but very rarely is there any response from the manufacturer.

As for packaging, New Zealand has a great deal to learn. Every firm operating abroad should send its packaging experts to Japan to study local trends. The New Zealand Dairy Products Marketing Commission has been exporting butter in pound packages to Japan.

Not one Japanese housewife in 10,000 would dream of buying a pound of butter. She wants it in half-pounds or better still in quarters.

And the packaging must be done in New Zealand before export. When butter is repatted at a later date there are changes in its structure which have resulted in it being rejected by the Japanese authorities.

Some of the New Zealand exporting firms are doing a first-rate job—in the round. But some are falling down on detail. Every effort is being made, on television and through other media, to teach Japanese how to cook mutton.

The drive has been so successful that Japan now wants another 20,000 tons this year. My information is that New Zealand interests have informed Tokio that there is no such quantity available. No ewe mutton, that white elephant of the sheep-meat trade?

This sort of contretemps will be solved only by a far greater accent on salesmanship and detail. I doubt if it will ever be solved by employing local agents. New Zealand must have its own salesmen abroad posted to Hongkong and Colombo or Tokio. It is no use relying either on agents who have no knowledge of the New Zealand scene or on trade commissioners who have no authority to sell anything.

SUMMING UP

MORE POSTS IN ASIA

Manila, June 3.

Not so many years ago The Daily News was in the vanguard of a press campaign which strove to tell New Zealanders that geography had made them Asians and urged the establishment of diplomatic and trade posts in this continent. The part The Daily News played in that campaign is understood and appreciated by many of the men now serving New Zealand in Asia.

I was indeed introduced to the Secretary-General of the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation, Mr. Pote Sarasin, as representing The Daily News which pioneered official New Zealand interest in Asia.

Since that time new posts of various types have been established in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Singapore, Jakarta and Hongkong and the Japanese post has been elevated to the rank of embassy.

Satisfactory though this seems on the surface it falls far short of the ideal on a variety of counts.

- In the first instance many New Zealand diplomats are under-ranked for the jobs they hold.
- Secondly, at least three further posts must soon be established.
- Thirdly, the time is long overdue for a drastic overhaul of the conditions of employment for diplomats abroad.
- Lastly—in capital letters—WE MUST STOP TRYING TO DO THINGS ON THE CHEAP.

Let us examine the position more closely. What do we expect of an embassy abroad? To perform consular duties for New Zealanders abroad or for foreigners wishing to visit or settle in New Zealand; to represent New Zealand interests; to publicise New Zealand abroad and keep the flag flying; to pull the Dominion's full weight in international discussions and to report on political, economic and social conditions in other countries.

Such listening posts are necessary to any free and independent country which wishes to pursue a free and independent policy. In Asia the charge is often laid that New Zealand policy is a parrot-like echo of Whitehall. Though the charge is not completely true it contains the germs of truth. How could it be otherwise when New Zealand is dependent on the United Kingdom for detailed information on trends and happenings in half the countries of the world?

Manifestly New Zealand cannot afford to maintain 80 or 90 or 100 posts abroad. It would be absurd to do so even if we could. The world's capitals are full of entirely unnecessary diplomatic posts.

Why, for instance, should Finland maintain an embassy in Bangkok? Finnish-Thai trade would not pay the postage on the ambassador's mail. Having nothing official to do, such redundant ambassadors employ their time entertaining each other at the national expense.

There is no fear of New Zealand going to this extreme because, in our insularity, we still continue to do our diplomacy on the cheap. In Bangkok our chief representative has a dual role—as diplomat and as representative on S.E.A.T.O. Yet he is still ranked as charge d'affaires where he should be an ambassador.

This is perhaps the time to raise the matter of salaries, allowances and privileges enjoyed by diplomats. Generally the top man in each post is well enough paid and his car, house and servants are a charge on the State. But the lower echelons have no such privileges. Their housing and other allowances are grossly inadequate. These men and women are the "poor whites" of the diplomatic corps everywhere in Asia.

In Asia housing is extraordinarily difficult for prestige demands that diplomats have premises suitable for entertainment. I know of one man who has shifted seven times in two years in an effort to find a house within his means. One New Zealand official I know pays £200 a month rent, and the general average throughout Asia is £100 per month.

There is only one way to offset this charge on the taxpayer. Sufficient houses must be bought in all Asian capitals to accommodate all the married staff. Not only will this reduce the cost to the taxpayer but it will relieve the diplomats themselves of personal worries inescapable in the present situation.

I can hear some democratic New Zealanders scoffing already; "Servants, indeed! What do they want with servants? They never had servants back home."

They need servants for their gardens, for in the climate of Asia no white man can garden, even if he has the time; they need servants to look after their children, to take them to and from school, for the diplomat's wife must be as free as her husband to attend important occasions, and they need servants to keep up with the Joneses.

Face is extremely important in Asia and servants so cheap that it would be false economy to do without them.

I will say that the first reaction of the New Zealand wife abroad is of guilt and frustration at being banished from her own kitchen.

Let it not be thought that the diplomat's life is a long round of cocktail and dinner parties. There are plenty of these. Far too many of them, and they are universally loathed by New Zealanders abroad. But for the diplomat abroad there is no 40-hour week—and no overtime. He is always on duty; so is his wife. Even his children are taught that they too are ambassadors

in embryo. For the Oriental rarely misses anything. He weighs up the foreigners in his midst and judges overseas countries by the calibre of the diplomats they send to him.

I called New Zealanders abroad the poor whites of the diplomatic corps. In every other Commonwealth diplomatic service generous leave privileges apply. Every two or three years, because of the wear and tear of tropic service, Canadians, Britons and others get a long leave of six months at home. The New Zealander gets the three weeks a year prescribed for public servants and the leave is spent in the country of service. When Canadian children are sent back to Canada for schooling, the Government pays for them to visit their parents in the long vacation. That does not apply to New Zealanders.

Half the trouble is the manner in which the estimates are set out each year. Instead of detailing the cost of posts, the basic salaries only of overseas diplomats should be shown and the allowances lumped together without individual specification. This would rob the narrow-minded insular member of Parliament or of the public of the ammunition for attack.

Either we must do this thing properly or give it up altogether.

I mentioned three places in Asia where I feel we must have posts. At the very lowest we need trade commissioners at Colombo and Manila where opportunities are going begging through lack of full-time official representation. The Bangkok office must become an embassy, and we must establish a high commission in Karachi. We have won few friends in Pakistan through siting a joint commission at New Delhi.

The official answer to these suggestions would probably be that New Zealand cannot afford these extra costs and has not enough suitable men to fill new posts from a corps less than 100 strong.

My reply to this is that we cannot afford not to do the job properly and that the men will be available if the conditions of employment are made attractive enough. Many brilliant young men have left the service in the last few years, usually for university posts, because they could see no future in the diplomatic service.

What of the quality of the men who serve us abroad?

On the whole they are doing a remarkable job under enormous difficulties. I have met one or two who appear to lack the equipment necessary but am assured that they were the best available. But the senior men, down to the level of first and second secretaries are all of a high standard with a true conception of their duties and a genuine interest in and liking for Asians. Indeed they are on the whole a far better diplomatic corps than we deserve to have with our niggardly penny-pinching approach.

Let me throw in one constructive suggestion. I believe that every year Parliament should appoint a select committee of three to the agreeable task of touring all the diplomatic posts and

examining how well they are equipped for the job they are doing. For the test of equity in this context it is not how big or small the diplomat's salary looks back home, but how it compares with the salary paid to a comparable Swede, Canadian or Australian.

And finally let me say that no diplomat has complained to me directly. A few have deplored this aspect or that because of the effect on the country's prestige; a few wives have given vent to little grievances concerning their children. My researches were made on my own account. Much of the information was made available by diplomats of other countries. So I am in no sense firing ammunition prepared for me. Indeed some diplomats I know may resent my trying to fight their battles.

But it is New Zealand's battles I am trying to fight. We are Asians; we are increasingly being regarded as Asians. So, if we are to be acceptable to Asians, we must live up to their ideas of national dignity.

A New Zealand businessman, managing director of a large firm, goes to Japan often on business. He has visiting cards specially printed for the occasion describing himself as "president," for managing directors are six to the yen in the land of Mitsubishi. Back home in New Zealand Jack is every bit as good as his "master"—sorry "employer." Here in Asia worth is measured by rank and position. It is as simple as that.

THESE I RECALL . . .

Hongkong, June 4.

Up two narrow flights of precipitous stairs I followed my companion and found myself in a coffee bar where I was confronted by the backs of four young Japanese who appeared to be gazing vacantly out into the street. Behind, in the half gloom of the narrow room others, male and female, sat without conversation looking through us towards the street. We whispered our coffee order and joined the throng.

This was one of many Japanese coffee shops which day and night play muted classical music from all over the world. In these boutiques silence is a tradition. The music-loving Japanese of all ages come here regularly, either for the music, the peace or the chance to rest their feet.

Twenty thousand air miles away from home I am now for the moment doubling back on my tracks. Perhaps therefore I can ask you to share with me some of my fleeting impressions of this fascinating continent.

Take first of all the old things that still hold sway in the jet and bulldozer age—as incongruous as the grandfather clock that stands at the foot of Bangkok's Emerald Buddha.

In bustling Japan, where, if you buy orange juice, as like as not it comes in a plastic orange, I saw women harvesting the barley, planted in neat rows like onions. They squatted and sliced no more than a dozen stalks at a time with small sickles and laid each handful with meticulous care beside the last.

In Singapore the women road workers wear red hats like crazy mortar-boards and the men who cut the roadside grass whirl their awkward long-handled sickles about their heads as if winding up for a hammer throw. On the downstroke the blade may snip off a stalk or two of grass.

In Japan and Hongkong all calculations are done, with eye-baffling speed, on abacus boards such as Confucius knew. Five beads for units and, above a partition, two more for tens. There are 20 such rows on the average abacus.

And Chinese mothers still carry their babies strapped to their backs, with one leg braced on each side of their mothers' bodies. It could be that this is the root cause of the curious Chinese walk in which the feet are kicked out on an angle of 60 degrees to one another.

The Japanese mother also carries her baby pick-a-back, with legs a-dangling and the Japanese walk differs from the Chinese. But the Japanese habit of floor-squatting in their own homes may be responsible for the not-so-attractive thighs and legs of most Japanese, whether male or female.

Japan is a land of contradictions. Their fantastic factories, the brighter-than-day city lights, the incredible precision of their driving should be measured against their primitive plumbing, their antiquated farming methods, their glorification of the male above the female.

Even the kimono is a contradiction. It is designed to clothe the wearer from neck to ankle, concealing all her curves, for it is immodest to suggest these to the public gaze. Yet nowhere else in the world does privacy or even nudity mean so little. The maids that invade one's bathroom in some Japanese hotels and chatter like sparrows as they scrub your back, the female masseuses who walk up and down the bather's back in the onsen or public bath-houses are only half the story. More than once in an hotel or airport I have walked through a door marked "gentlemen" to find a female cleaner scrubbing the floor, and had the greatest difficulty in shoving her out.

What traveller to Asia at this time of year can ever forget the cloying sweetness of the frangipani and the scarlet glory of the flame of the forest trees that have been in full bloom wherever I have travelled?

I have the strongest impression that all bush or forest looks alike wherever one finds it. In Malaya, Burma, Japan and Taiwan I have seen trees and tree-ferns that to my unbotanical eyes seemed indistinguishable from our own. Of course there are many others—the great teak trees of Thailand and Malaya, the formal gingko trees of Japan, the casuarina and the trimmed tamarisks of Manila.

Even in crowded Singapore and Hongkong the trees remain. Sometimes a building is built about them. I have seen a Bangkok roof built round the gnarled limb of a vast mangrove.

But it is the Japanese who really love and understand trees. Their gnarled century-old dwarf trees are handed down from generation to generation in city families which have no outdoor gardens. Give a Japanese a plot 10 yards square and he will make of it a formal garden which looks like a Japanese landscape and is completely balanced and enchanting.

The grey fir trees in the countryside, in the parks and atop the moat walls about the Imperial Palace come straight from Japanese prints and have been trained that way. A Japanese park is a delight. Everything is balanced yet natural. There is no dead wood, no fallen leaves. Yes, the Japanese love trees passionately. They even have two words for "to die," one applying only to trees.

I missed cherry blossom time but was there for the iris flowering and the first azalea blooms. Yet despite all this, Japanese who have visited New Zealand call our country reverently "the land of flowers."

Nor can I forget the impeccable manners of the East. In six weeks I have heard only two angry sentences—both uttered on

the horrible evening in Hongkong when I sweated with 5000 others on an interminable vigil awaiting a ferry. Even in the traffic tangles, which are frequent and inevitable, cross words are seldom spoken.

And in six weeks I have heard only two children crying. The first time the mother apologised in broken English because her baby had a stomach ache. On the second occasion a tiny girl was bellowing because an imp of an older brother was surreptitiously sticking something sharp into her posterior.

The Chinese appear to have forsaken their old greeting of shaking hands with themselves on meeting a friend. But they are friendly, approachable and the soul of courtesy. The Japanese exchange bows, smiles and formal sentences. I wonder how many times a day "arigato gozai masu" (thank you very much) and "doitashi mashite" (you are welcome) are uttered in Tokio alone. Nor does the courtesy end with words. Time and again Japanese have gone blocks out of their way to direct me on my route, and the manners of their shop assistants defy description.

Among the Thais with their hands-in-prayer greeting and their youthful exuberance, manners take an unusual form. Where we discuss the weather with newly-met acquaintances, the Thai approach gets down to basic things.

"How old are you? How many children have you? Have you had dysentery yet? No? Well, if you have I'll tell you how to cure it."

And all over Asia you have only to smile at a solemn-faced child to become on close terms with the whole street. The passport to Asian affections however, is to be accompanied by a European child, preferably male and preferably blond. Such blond boys fascinate all Asians, all of whose children have black hair and sloe-black eyes.

Then there are the barbers. After my exhausting experience in a Bangkok barber's shop I entered a Japanese saloon in some apprehension. I was spared the judo and all-in wrestling match, I escaped without a manicure or losing my shoes but my face, neck and skull were submitted to an extraordinary massaging routine with finger and knuckle which I had never before encountered—but which was so invigorating that I'd risk it again.

Much has been said and written of the filth and squalor of the East. Much of it is true. All over Asia there is little appreciation of the value of hygiene. (As I write from a neighbouring roof-top four eviscerated ducks are hanging up to dry—in a Hongkong smog). Yet except among India's untouchables and professional beggars all Asians are scrupulously clean in themselves. The children return immaculate from school and I have never seen a Chinese or Japanese whose suit, shirt or dress did not appear to come straight from the cleaners.

Talking of cleanliness, one of Asia's more pleasant habits is the hot or cold towel routine. In every Chinese restaurant as you

sit down, and later between courses, waitresses bring you cool, wet towels touched with eau-de-cologne for wiping your face and hands. The Japanese prefer their towels steaming hot.

On the roof-tops opposite, where a town lives above a city, the same roof-tops lashed by Typhoon Alice a fortnight ago, two Chinese boys are playing table tennis and a hundred others are flying kites. The junks are crawling back into harbour and the first lights are showing in the ships in the roadstead.

And below me comes the subdued rumbling belly-noise of a great city. So, "sayonara" for now, or in the argot of Hongkong —"chayng-chayng."

ASIA

A LAST LOOK AT SEATO

Sydney, June 12.

In the 46 articles preceding this one I have endeavoured to give readers, piecemeal, the answers I found to the various "notes" on the theme I set myself at the outset of my tour. With one exception. As yet I have had nothing to say on Asian reactions to S.E.A.T.O., one of the two alliances on which the defence of New Zealand is based.

I was warned by authorities in Wellington not to accept snap answers on this question. For example, a member of a neutral country, asked his view on S.E.A.T.O., would normally reply: "All defence pacts are bad. We want none of them." And in his heart of hearts he might be thanking Heaven (or Allah or Buddha) that S.E.A.T.O. exists.

To reach this second stage answer I devised an approach that might make the legal purist shudder but which proved fairly effective.

I asked an extremely responsible Indian the following question:—

"In recent years the Indian attitude to S.E.A.T.O. appears to have grown less hostile. Could this be due to the Chinese incursions on your frontiers?"

The answer was: "Possibly. The Chinese incursions have altered our thinking on many things. But the real reason for the change is that S.E.A.T.O. has not worked out as badly as we feared it would. We did not like the manner of its birth — out of the Geneva conference of Indo-China — nor the midwife, John Foster Dulles.

"In the event S.E.A.T.O. has not proved belligerent or sabre rattling. Indeed, it has had quite a moderating effect. But don't for a moment think that we approve of it wholeheartedly, or that we intend to join it."

From other Indians I received similar views.

Pakistan, of course, is unreservedly for the treaty, but mutters a little, as do other Asian members, at the discordant note struck by France in many of the meetings.

In Ceylon the somewhat cynical view expressed to me by a person high up in the Government was: "Why should I complain if the neighbour's eaves keep the rain off my doorstep?"

From which I gather that Ceylon is not unconscious that S.E.A.T.O. is working also for Ceylon's protection.

When I mentioned the Indian views to the S.E.A.T.O. Secretary-General, Mr. Pote Sarasin, and the New Zealand representative on S.E.A.T.O., Mr. Charles Craw, they exchanged interested glances.

"That ties up," said Mr. Sarasin. "Last year a couple of Indians applied to join one of the S.E.A.T.O. technical schools. We would have been happy to have them, but the Indian Government refused them passports. This year four others applied and were granted passports. A straw in the wind."

In and about Bangkok, the nerve centre of S.E.A.T.O., there are hints of dissatisfaction at the quality of the representatives sent by some S.E.A.T.O. members. Rank and ability are important to Asians, and I have heard the view that the type of man sent by one or two members as permanent representatives suggests that these countries are not taking S.E.A.T.O. very seriously.

These charges are never laid at the doors of Australia and New Zealand to whom S.E.A.T.O. is very important indeed but, despite one or two outstanding examples to the contrary, first by Mr. Nash and this year by Mr. Holyoake, the suspicion lingers that the New Zealand attitude in S.E.A.T.O. discussions is a meek echo of the English one.

It is futile trying to point out that more often than not there are no more than two views to be taken on a given problem and that British and New Zealand interests are thus quite often identical.

Tunku Abdul Rahman has a novel view of S.E.A.T.O.

"There are only three Asian members," he told me. "In Asia membership of S.E.A.T.O. implies an admitted inability to defend oneself alone. We in Malaya cannot defend ourselves alone. But we have a Treaty with Britain and are playing host to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. Thus we get our guarantee without paying the price of loss of face.

"If S.E.A.T.O. gets involved in war, the Commonwealth reserve will not leave Malaya for the battle line. That we are adamant on. We do not wish to be involved. The brigade would go first to another S.E.A.T.O. country."

This seemed a highly involved case of eating one's cake and having it.

"For those small Powers with no bilateral defence ties, S.E.A.T.O. is a very good thing," said the Tunku.

In Formosa the only interest in S.E.A.T.O. is in American participation. The argument runs that so long as the United States remains the key figure in S.E.A.T.O. she is unlikely to withdraw from other Asian commitments, and will thus be the more likely to continue to guarantee Formosa against attack from the mainland.

The Japanese are not really interested one way or another. They will argue academically that there are too many lame ducks in S.E.A.T.O. to enable it to be truly effective, but allow that it preserves an anti-Communist front. However, several Japanese suggested to me that New Zealand is adequately guarded by the A.N.Z.U.S. pact and that S.E.A.T.O.'s additional protection

might not counterbalance the extra risk of involvement in fighting which membership of the organisation carries with it.

In most cases interest in S.E.A.T.O. seemed only lukewarm in those parts of Asia outside it orbit. Possibly we should take heart from the fact that there is little violent opposition, but I have an uncomfortable feeling that the prevailing attitude is due not to a half-hearted conviction of S.E.A.T.O.'s value but to a belief that the organisation is not particularly efficacious.

Indeed, the only aspects of S.E.A.T.O. which evoke any spark of enthusiasm among uncommitted Asians are the economic and other non-military ones.

But let me repeat in this final paragraph — these are only one man's impressions. Forty days in Asia have not made me an expert on Asia and the Asians. I would need 40 years to make any such claim.

IN RETROSPECT

Over Australia, June 12.

We are flying high above the tortured wrinkled dead heart of Northern Australia, a red and yellow wilderness of salt-pans and nothingness. Here, poised between Asia and New Zealand over a land without people and human complications, is as good a time as any to generalise on Asia, as I will certainly be expected to do on my return to New Zealand.

My first and strongest impression of 12 countries is of drive and purpose. Almost everywhere Asian Governments are following four-year plans, erecting vast blocks of flats, laying down new motorways or opening new hydro-electric plants. The drive and purpose are not so apparent in the ordinary people themselves. To them Asia is as it always was. To them the doings of Governments are remote and uninteresting. And Asia is still largely peopled by these patient, primitive folk concerned with their rice crops and the petty personal problems of a life of poverty.

Sometimes, of course, an event occurs which shows these people with great clarity the kind face of the anonymous men who rule. Between my two visits to Singapore a disastrous fire broke out in a low-class housing area. Before it could be contained 16,000 people were homeless and four had died.

Within a matter of days the Government had made available 1150 permanent apartments to the refugees, accounting for nearly half the homeless. The rest are in temporary quarters but all will be permanently housed in flats by September.

The area was a distressed area which the Government planned to pull down. Thus the fire fitted in very nicely with its plans. ("Too nicely," whisper the cynics who believe the fire was deliberately started to prevent the Government incurring unpopularity through compulsorily displacing people from their squalid homes which few wanted to leave.)

Yes, drive and vitality are the things that catch the eye about Asia's rulers and businessmen.

I saw no evidence of the same drive and vitality in the West's dealings with the East. Indeed, one of my most depressing conclusions is that the West has run out of ideas in Asia. We have no answer to the dynamism of the communist message. In all our dealings with Asians we seem on the defensive and short of fresh approaches. There is nothing new or attractive about the democratic idea the way we try to teach it. Indeed, all over Asia we appear to play our cards according to the whim or need of the moment.

No could I fail to be struck with the mystique that is being built up round the name "Asia." The press and certain politicians of all countries are busily cultivating the idea that to be "Asian" is to belong to a mighty political bloc. The idea has caught on among intellectuals. I have been told earnestly that New Zealand and Australia must climb on the "Asia" bandwaggon.

At the moment, however, the mystque is phoney and insubstantial. Certain Asian nations, notably the Japanese, will have nothing to do with it. The Japanese are Asians only when they are forced to define themselves.

What is more, the spacious, specious talk of an Asian brotherhood cannot disguise the deep and petty antagonisms and jealousies between Asian countries. India and Pakistan, as all the world knows, are bitterly and mutually suspicious. Burma believes Thailand is supplying rebel forces inside Burma. The Thais and Cambodians are at loggerheads over a border temple.

Wherever I went in Asia Europeans questioned me keenly on the countries I had visited. Not so the Asians, who in the main are uninterested in any Asian country other than their own.

The hollowness of the Asia mystique is further shown by the fact that efforts at self-help among Asian States have generally fallen flat. No Asian likes having to sit at the feet of a teacher from another part of Asia. There is a loss of dignity in the process. The Asian still likes all instructors to have white faces.

This leads to my next impression. Despite the virulence of the anti-colonial campaigns in Asia I found not the slightest trace of any hostility to the European as such. Quite the contrary. Throughout most of Asia the prestige of Britain stands extraordinarily high, not so much for her past power and glory, but for the wisdom of her past and present dealings with Asia, which are only now being appreciated for their true worth.

Despite the follies of American politicians and the crass behaviour of some American tourists, there is much goodwill for the United States and a good deal of respect for her ideals, her power, her wealth and her genuine philanthropy.

Whatever else it has achieved the anti-colonial campaign of the last 15 years has not turned the Asian against the European. I have met dozens of lowly people who believe they were better treated by the British than by their own people today. If so much violent propaganda can have so little effect on people's minds, perhaps communism has made fewer advances in Asia than the pessimists think.

Yet these things, however important they be, are more meretricious, less fundamental than the fact I did not need to go to Asia to discover—the sprawling monolithic menace of Red China, lying like a hurricane warning over the whole continent.

Fear of the Chinese and of China dominates much Asian thought. On the national scale Peking is feared because of its strength, its expansiveness and doubts about its aims. On a smaller scale Chinese minorities are feared and distrusted because of their skills, their fecundity and their insistence on remaining Chinese wherever they may be.

Earlier on I devoted an article to the ideological battle of the giants (India and China) that may determine the fate of democracy in Asia, if not in the world. I said that the odds are on China because her human resources are richer and greater.

This is our battle, too, and it will be won only if India gets a great deal more encouragement from the United States than she has previously received. Perhaps now that the President's back-room boy, Galbraith, has gone to New Delhi this will be forthcoming.

I am convinced that the crowded continent contains illimitable opportunities for New Zealand trade if we are prepared to get out and sell; if we are willing to give the customer the goods he wants in the packages he prefers at the time he wants them and if we are prepared to spend vast sums on advertisement. The rewards to be won are enormous but they will not be won without courageous and intelligent publicity and a little daring.

And finally let there be no shadow of doubt. Asia is our continent. We are as completely part of it as Iceland or Ireland is part of Europe.

I want to see more Asian children coming to New Zealand for their schooling; more young New Zealanders going to Asia to pass on their skills. At the moment the name of New Zealand stands very high indeed in Asian eyes. But in this fast-moving world we must constantly be making a new effort in order to hold today's position.

After less than two months in Asia I am in no sense an expert on the area. I have had, however, opportunities that fall to few to meet and talk frankly with prominent Asians. I have thus been able to short-circuit a lot of research.

The facts I found can be found in books; the flavour of the continent can be found only on the spot.

I make no apology therefore for putting forward my views forcibly for I know hundreds of Europeans and Asians in the continent I have just left who would agree with every word.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The following list of people contains some, but by no means all of the more important sources of Mr. Fullarton's information. Mr. Fullarton interviewed most of the people listed but in a few cases received their views through intermediaries. For obvious reasons no names of New Zealand or foreign diplomats are included.

SINGAPORE:

The Earl of Selkirk, U.K. Commissioner for South-east Asia.
Sir Dennis Allen, his deputy from the Foreign Office.
Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister.
Mr. Rajaratnam, Minister of Culture.
Mr. Li Vei-chen, Mr. Lee Siow Long and Mr. Hon Sui Sen, Ministry of Culture.
Mr. G. G. Thomson, head of political study centre.
Mr. du Clos, Radio Singapore.
Major P. L. James, Commissioner of Prisons.
Inspector Dutton, superintendent of Pulau Senang.
Mr. A. P. Rajah, deputy Leader of Opposition.
Dr. A. W. Thevathasan, Singapore doctor and personality.
Mr. David Marshall, former Chief Minister and now leader of Workers' Party.
The following newspapermen: Mr. Liau Sung Yang (Sin Chew Jit Poh), Mr. Othman Wok (Utusan Melayu), Mr. Sze Chusian (Nanyang Siang Pau), Mr. David Tambya (Straits Times).

CEYLON:

Mrs. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister.
Mr. Felix Dias-Bandaranaike, her nephew.
Mr. Philip Gunawardena, leader of the Socialist Party and former Minister of Agriculture.
Captain R. C. Raja Rayan, prominent Tamil and agent for New Zealand produce.
Miss Piauchaud, women's leader.
(Because of the restrictive laws now applying in Ceylon I prefer not to name my other Opposition contacts in Ceylon.)

PAKISTAN:

Mr. A. J. Raziur-Rahman, director of Basic Democracies.
Mr. H. H. Cutler, Australian High Commissioner.
Dr. Butterfield, noted Karachi personality and New Zealand citizen.
H. M. Habibullah, author, and "deputy mayor" of Karachi.
Leading officials of the departments responsible for basic democracies and law drafting.

INDIA:

Mr. J. A. Nehru, Prime Minister.
Mr. Khana, his secretary and former Ambassador to Bonn.
Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, former Minister of Health and secretary to Gandhi.
Mrs. Lakshmi Menon, deputy Minister of External Affairs.
Mr. Pritti Singh, formerly Ambassador to Malaya.
Mr. P. N. Menon, head of publicity section, External Affairs Department.
Mr. C. Desai, Foreign Secretary.
Dr. Sikka, president Delhi Milk Scheme.

BURMA:

U. Raschid Ali, Minister of Industries and Commerce.
Mr. C. H. Khoo, president of Chinese Overseas Investment Trust.
U. Cho Kin, industrialist.
Mr. Manek M. Sidhwa, industrialist.

THAILAND:

Prince Wan, ex-president U.N.O.
Pote Sarasin, secretary-general of S.E.A.T.O.
Dr. Simarn, brilliant surgeon and personality.
Other Government officials and Opposition leaders.

HONGKONG:

F. S. Li, millionaire industrialist and member of the Legislative Council.
H. Lee, member of Legislative Council.
Mr. Woodward, Marine Department.
Mr. D. Skellett, barrister and old China hand of 34 years' standing.
Leading members of the European and Chinese communities whose full names I have not kept details of.

TAIWAN:

President Chiang Kai-Shek.
Mr. Yu Ta-wei, Defence Minister.
Mr. J. T. Shen, Ministry of Communications.
Mr. Sherman Wang, deputy manager, Central of China.
Mr. Jain C. Chang, Information Department.
Mr. Spencer P. S. Shih and other key figures of the Department of Reconstruction.
Professor Grange Woolley, Drew University, New Jersey.

JAPAN:

Admiral Nomura, ex-Ambassador to United States and chairman of Government Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Roo Watanabe, international secretary, Democratic Socialist Party.

Mr. Fusao Yamaguchi, international bureau, Socialist Party.

Mr. Koichi Kihata, director Japan T.U.C. (Zenro).

Mr. Hiroshi Mori, engineer.

Mr. T. Inumaru, M.B.E., president Hotels Association.

Mr. Isamu Kobayashi, international director, General Council of Trade Unions (S.O.H.Y.O.).

Mr. Haruo Wada, general secretary Zenro.

The following editors: Tatsuo Shibata (Mainichi Daily News), George Y. Somekawa (Asahi Evening News), Masaru Ongawa (Japan Times), Ohara (Asahi Shimbun), Masaaki Kasagi (chief international section, Editors' Association).

Mr. Naoyuki Hori, foreign relations director, Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

PHILIPPINES:

Senor Carlos Romulo, ex-president and ex-president of U.N.O., and numerous unnamed delegates to the Nationalista convention.

Mr. Kaw Peng, importer of New Zealand dairy produce.

MALAYA:

Tunku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister.

Tuan Syid Abadin, permanent secretary, Ministry of Information.

Inche Mohamed Sophiee bin Sheikh Ibrahim, director of information and formerly on U.N. mission to the Congo.

Professor G. Maxwell Davies, University of Malaya and the following editors: Mr. L. C. Hoffman (Straits Times), Mr. F. M. Hutton (Malaya Mail), Mr. S. P. Tilak (Straits Echo), Inche Said Zahari (Utusan Melayu), Mr. Wilson Sung Teow Leong (Nanyang Siang Pau), Mr. K. C. Arun (Tamil Nesan), Mr. J. P. Chin (Tiger Press).

To these must be added many overseas correspondents whom it would be improper to identify in a list such as this.

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